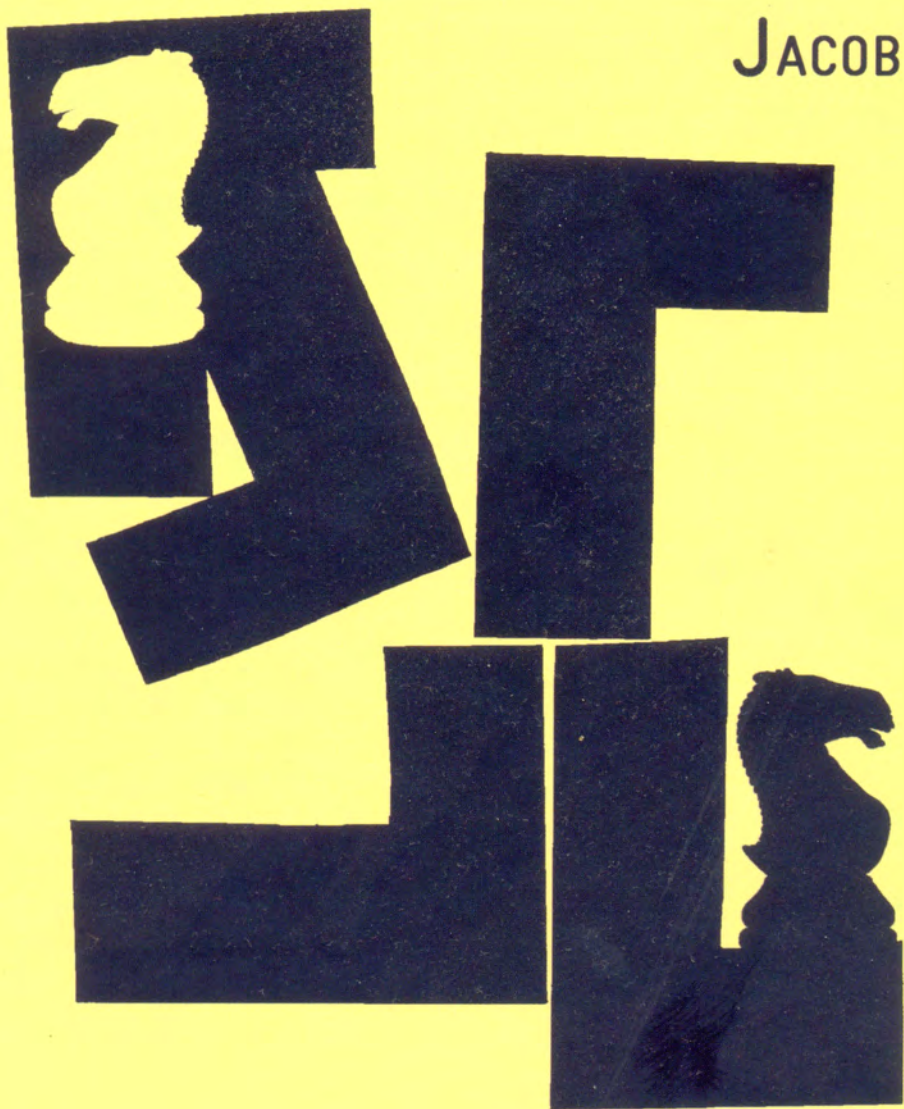


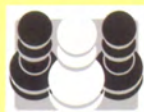
GRANDMASTER PREPARATION

CALCULATION

JACOB AAGAARD



QUALITY CHESS

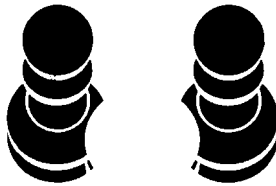


Grandmaster Preparation

CALCULATION

By

Jacob Aagaard



Quality Chess
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Grandmaster Preparation — Calculation

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All sales or enquiries should be directed to Quality Chess UK Ltd,
20 Balvie Road, Milngavie, Glasgow G62 7TA, United Kingdom

Phone +44 141 333 9588

e-mail: info@qualitychess.co.uk

website: www.qualitychess.co.uk

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Key to symbols used

±	White is slightly better
∓	Black is slightly better
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
=	equality
≡	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
∅	unclear
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
!?	a move worth considering
?!	a move of doubtful value
#	mate
△	White to move
▼	Black to move
⊕	The goal of the exercise is to stay in the game or force a draw

Foreword

I have always liked books with challenging exercises. No matter what level you reach, it is important to keep your mind sharp and ensure that your calculation is as quick and precise as it can be. This can only be achieved by continuous practice.

After I told Jacob Aagaard that I had worked with his book Practical Chess Defence, he started to send me exercise positions, some of which can be found in the Quality Chess Puzzle Book (co-written with John Shaw) and now this book. I have enjoyed solving these positions over the last few years and found them helpful. I am sure the same will be true of the reader. There is no shortcut to the Grandmaster title, but there is a well-known route that many people have walked over the years. Jacob offers to guide you on part of this journey and I hope you will take him up on the offer.

Boris Gelfand

Winner of 2009 World Cup and 2012 World Championship Challenger

Series Introduction

Ever since I was a junior I have been a chess trainer. At times my dissatisfaction with the conditions for trainers has caused me to be a player as well; and not without some success. But at the end of the day I have had to accept that my destiny is not to feel comfortable on the stage, but rather in the anonymity of the locker room. I have always cared more for the results of my students than my own, just as I have always had lots of passion for training others, but none for training myself.

Over the years I have developed some of the skills necessary to become a decent trainer, not least of all the ability to earn a living by other means! Among other things this means I have become a chess writer. From the moment I started taking pride in my work, I have developed into a not entirely bad one, to the degree where I am finally comfortable enough to publish this series of books, which I have been dreaming about for years.

The series title *Grandmaster Preparation* is of course a little joke, as the five books originally planned do not include any coverage of the opening. But it is also a serious point at the same time. Grandmaster play does not occur in a vacuum, and it consists of much more than opening preparation, random intuition and even more random calculation. There are rules and methods that have been successful for many decades and will continue to be so in the future. One of my main objectives with this project has been to merge this classic understanding of chess with my own ideas and create a serious training plan for ambitious players.

This is the most ambitious project I have undertaken in my professional life, and there is no escaping the unavoidable imperfection of the execution. I hope the reader will forgive me in advance for any mistakes, but at the same time offer me the confidence to believe in most of what I claim throughout these books. They are heavily researched and based on my experience of working with close to a thousand individuals over the years: from my own daughters, who recently discovered the joy of capturing a piece, to friends who have been involved in World Championship matches. So, please develop your own understanding of chess by questioning everything I say, but at the same time, please never disregard anything I say as unfounded.

When I was a young man I had no access to a classical chess education, and many other grandmasters have had the same experience. It is my hope that this series will help to change this picture in the same way that Mark Dvoretsky's books have, and the way that Artur Yusupov's series of nine books (*Fundamentals*, *Beyond the Basics* and *Mastery*) have given juniors and amateurs a clearly-structured method of improvement.

The ultimate goal for this series is to show a path towards playing chess at grandmaster level for those who do not have access to a good trainer. I have worked with some grandmasters who had the kinds of holes in their chess understanding that would baffle the average man on the street. Obviously they excelled in other aspects of the game simultaneously, but over time their weaknesses became obvious to their opponents and their results duly suffered. This series is meant to help those players as well.

Jacob Aagaard, Glasgow 2012

Concentration, Concentration, Concentration

Gligoric was of course right when he described chess as containing these three aspects. You might want to argue that it also contains a bit of understanding and a lot of preparation – and I shall let you get away with it. But at the end of the day chess is about solving one problem only:

What should I play on the next move?

This is of course a difficult question to answer, and there are a lot of approaches that may prove useful in different scenarios. Let's mention just a few: *Intuition, memory, general principles, pattern recognition, reading your opponent's body language, receiving illegal help from outside and guessing.*

Although most of these can be beneficial if used correctly, and some might lead to considerable success in the short term, it is my belief that **nothing will bring you greater success than analysing the position.**

This can be done in various ways. If the position is of a positional nature (meaning there is not really anything to calculate), there are several useful tools to employ. If the position is of a strategic nature (meaning there is something to calculate, but all goals are long-term and the changes to the position likely to be of a static nature) there are other tools. And the same goes for technical positions, of course.

For tactical positions, the consistently most effective frame of mind is that of **calculation** and the associated tools that come with it. The tools to which I refer can be defined as:

Simple ideas that will assist you in focusing on the most important aspects of the position

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of this project was to keep the ideas simple. It sounds like a contradiction: combining grandmaster-level training material with a small number of straightforward guiding principles. However, I am convinced that it was the right approach and I was determined to make it work, despite the inevitable difficulties.

Simplicity is the governing approach for this whole series

I do not believe that we can use complicated processes to navigate complicated positions – at least not with any consistent success. So throw away your nine-step thinking algorithms and forget about the tree of analysis. All the skills you need for successful calculation can be developed using the principles and training material found in these pages. But before we can go into specifics, I want to tell you:

What not to expect from this book

This is my second book about calculation and I want to make one thing clear – this is a workbook, not a theoretical work intended to cover all bases. My previous book on calculation *Excelling at*

Chess Calculation is eight years old by now, but in my mind it still stands as a decent theoretical work. However, as the saying goes:

**The difference between theory and practice is that in theory there is no difference,
but in practice there inevitably is**

As it is not my intention to replicate the *Excelling* book here, I would urge you to buy that book and to read it if you feel you need the theoretical bases covered. You certainly do not *have* to read it in order to progress with the training plan in this book, but it will give you a more rounded understanding of calculation. Especially if you read it a few times!

In this book I will not focus on all the minor elements of calculation that I discussed in the aforementioned book, such as *assumptions, unforcing thinking, desperados, domination, the reversal of moves, taking a fresh look, visualisation, stepping stones, when is it time to calculate* and a few pawn endings! This does not mean that these factors are not important; on the contrary, the understanding of those topics is still highly relevant to the present book. However, for this project I thought it more appropriate to go for a broader structure as kindly suggested by Mark Dvoretsky.

What to expect from this book

The followed subjects were also handled in *Excelling*: *candidates, combinational vision, prophylaxis, comparison, elimination, intermediate moves* and *imagination*. The only addition to the overall frame is that of *traps*, which is hopefully entertaining as well as instructive.

In eight sections we will go through these techniques, after a small introduction, which is meant to inspire you more than anything. The exercises get increasingly difficult within the chapters, but obviously there will be some individual discrepancies there.

After this I have compiled ten tests with six positions each. I have created a small points system so that you can evaluate your performance at the end.

Finally the last chapter will offer you 75 difficult positions to bang your head against until it bleeds. I recommend having the first aid kit at hand.

One question was not easy for me to answer when I was putting the book together. Should I give hints in the tests and the 'difficult positions' chapters? In the end I chose to do so, thinking that the exercises are difficult enough to start with, without adding the uncertainty of what method of thinking should be used to solve them. If you want to solve positions without this hint, go to your bookshelves and pull down another exercise book. There are plenty to choose from.

I would like you to write down your solutions

Please write down the main points of your main lines. This does not mean you need to write down everything you see or all lines, only that you write down *the main point* of the exercise. If you have seen them, you get the point allotted. If not, you don't. And the way to be sure is to write them down!

The main reason for this is that:

Calculation is only a tool to aid in the decision-making process

At the board it is not important what we see, only what we play. Making better decisions is what improving in chess is all about at the most fundamental level. If you write down your solutions, you are accountable to yourself for the quality of your decision-making, especially whether you saw the most important details needed to make the right decision. Luck is not a factor to rely on and neither is its cousin guessing!

Another advantage with writing your analysis down is that you can finish a whole page before you check the solutions on the next page, without risking seeing the solution for the next exercise.

When to give up

My recommendation is to take up to 30 minutes per position, if you are failing to solve them. Also I recommend that you move on to the next chapter if you start to feel stuck. The reason for this is my basic belief that:

The best training material has a difficulty level of 110-120%

What I mean by this is that we need to find exercises we can solve, but only with some (not enormous) difficulty. Jonathan Rowson correctly rephrased a common saying when he wrote:

Improvement starts at the end of your comfort zone

This not only means that you need to get outside of your comfort zone, but also that you need to stay within the proximity of your comfort zone. All successful training systems are based on incremental improvement, from elementary school to the training of athletes.

No one becomes a star overnight – it is all incremental improvement

The cover story of *New in Chess* 2012 #3 is about how Capablanca is the “Mozart of chess”, not Carlsen (as in the *60 Minutes* TV program). Who gives a monkey’s?

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was the son of one of the most esteemed composers of his time. He was intensely trained from the age of more or less newborn until he eventually composed masterpieces in his early 20s (though I am more a Bach or Beethoven fan personally). Yes, he did compose a symphony at the age of five or whatever, but in his father’s handwriting and with large sections copied from existing pieces.

The ‘natural’ no-effort genius does not exist

Not everyone learns equally well, but the only deciding factors I have been able to locate in all the literature I have gone through are: 1) motivation of the student; 2) support from parents, partners and so on; and 3) the quality of the training method.

Clearly I cannot have an influence on the first and second of these, but I can with the quality of the training method. The approach in this book is heavily based on my work with Mark Dvoretsky, both personally and with his books. Mark is still widely acknowledged as the best trainer in the world and strays very little from the method that he has used in his training with the best players in the world (I remember about a decade ago that more than half of the players in the top 100 had at one time worked with Mark, although some of them did so only fleetingly).

What I am saying here is that improvement is a steady, incremental process that will take some time and effort. The payoff is often not immediate, and there might be a time when you feel that you are working hard without seeing the desired increase in rating or whatever your goal is. It is my personal experience that:

We always underestimate the amount of work needed to reach our goal by 25-50%

My point is that you *will* get the desired results, and you will feel much happier when you do. Not so much because of the results themselves, as by the fact that you persevered and achieved what you set out to achieve. In *Thinking Inside the Box* I will talk extensively about the psychology of chess training and similar things, but if you are starting with this book, I want you to know at least this:

If you do the work you will see significant improvement – guaranteed

This does not mean that I am offering your money back or to reimburse you for the time spent working on this book if you do not meet your goal. The guarantee is both weaker and stronger than that. It is stronger for the same reason that you *know* you will lose the extra kilos if you give up the unhealthy foods you are addicted to and eat lots of vegetables and fruit instead. You know that if you go to an Italian language course for a year you will be able to speak some Italian at the end.

But you also know that this does not mean you will automatically be able to charm the Italian girl you want to impress! Results that involve opposition cannot be guaranteed. All I (or anyone) can guarantee is that you will be in a much better state to meet these challenges if you do the right preparation. And this is what this book is about.

If you follow the program, you will eventually be calculating at grandmaster level

Which is more than many grandmasters are able to do. Obviously this will not necessarily be achieved in 450 exercises (although for some it definitely will be). Many will want to go through other books of training material in order to improve their calculation continuously; and maybe return to crack the exercises they were not able to solve the first time around.

I cannot promise you the grandmaster title; you need a crooked organiser for that. But do the work, and slowly you will acquire the necessary abilities. What you do with them will always be up to you.

Calculation Theory in 60 Seconds

Before each section of puzzles I have included some small essays with examples of how the various calculation techniques can be used in practice. The main point is to inspire you as well as to give a small taste of what the techniques can do. In this chapter you will find a brief overview of the theory of calculation.

The Eight Calculation Techniques

Let us go through the core idea of each technique quickly, remembering that the most important aspects of calculation are concentration and determination. They are the motor and the fuel; the techniques are merely the satnav.

Candidate moves

This is the art of seeing before you think. We all notice two or three ideas in any position in the first three seconds. But we are not guaranteed that they are the best ones. If we train ourselves to look for additional ideas, we will end with a list of interesting moves, which it makes sense to calculate. This process of looking for moves and ideas is what we will be training in Chapter 1.

After you have compiled your ideas, make a quick check of each of them. The ideas from one line are highly likely to be useful in another line. It will also help you choose a sensible order in which to calculate them.

Combinational Vision

It is very rare that new combinations are played. Almost all combinations are based to some degree on well-known patterns. In order to be good at calculation you need to pay your dues and spend a significant amount of time solving combinations.

Prophylaxis

Also known as attention to the opponent's ideas and counter-chances. As our opponents make every second move it would be foolish not to include their ideas in our thinking. But eating too much chocolate is foolish too and guess what – I had my share. The ability to focus on our opponent's intentions, offensive or defensive, is essential for success in chess. And this is what we will train in this chapter.

Comparison

Comparing two similar decisions and working out the differences can be vital. This ranges from the simple situation where there are obvious advantages to one move over another, to more complex variations where you have to find the subtle idea that makes all the difference.

Elimination

At times it is useful to look for what is wrong with a move to a greater extent than what is good about it. The technique of elimination is a hard-hitting tool for us, as if we do not shoot our poor ideas down, they have a tendency to appear on the board and get the rough treatment. For this reason this technique is especially useful in defence, although not only then.

Intermediate Moves

Also known as the deadly enemy of assumptions. We should be well trained for looking at the option of throwing a spanner in the wheel of our opponents. Especially as it is such great fun to see them crash when they are going too fast!

Imagination

A common belief goes that you cannot train imagination and it is all down to “natural ability”. If you believe this too, re-read page 9 now! If not (or if you are back from reading page 9) let me assure you that acquiring imagination in chess is like acquiring any other skill. Training works.

Traps

Setting traps is prophylaxis for beggars. You try to read your opponent’s mind and see how you can get him to make a mistake. It will not work every time, but it can be a really useful skill to turn to, when everything else has failed.

A few additional thoughts

On top of the eight calculation techniques covered in this book, there are a few good habits of calculation I would like you to consider including in your thought process.

What is important in this position?

Usually we think we know and sometimes we even do. But at times it is wise to check that we really do know what matters, and if what mattered two moves ago still does.

What am I trying to achieve?

If you do not have a clear answer to this question, then this is the first thing to sort out. Make sure you have clearly defined your aim.

Decide more or less how much time you are willing to invest on this move

This is important for practical games, but also for the ten tests later in this book.

Calculate forcing moves first

You will learn more about the position this way as well as satisfy the natural curiosity we all possess. Also these lines tend to be easier to calculate than lines involving quiet moves.

Use your common sense when you decide what to analyse first

Or in all other situations!

What is the drawback of my opponent's last move?

This is not going to help you much in a puzzle book, but it is a really useful question to ask yourself at the board.

Be practical

Chess is about effective decision-making. Effective means quick. Only analyse necessary variations. This is why I recommend that you calculate slower. It saves time in the same way it can save you time when you are driving by not missing your exit!

Don't think about decisions that you need to make in the future

There are many quotes in classical literature that say exactly the same thing; this is my favourite: *My life has been full of terrible misfortunes, most of which never happened* – Michel de Montaigne.

Calculate a bit slower

This one usually confuses people, but the logic is easy to follow. Quality over quantity: make sure you are calculating the right variations. Usain Bolt is not only the world's fastest man; he also has complete control over what direction he needs to take. He has the habit of looking at the track before bolting down it...

Calculate only what you have to

Always consider whether or not it is necessary to calculate a variation deeply before doing so. Again remember that “new ideas at the start of a variation are a good deal more important than refinements at the end of it” – Mark Dvoretsky.

Don't let your thoughts skip from one line to another and back several times over

Slightly rephrasing Blumenfeld. You need to structure your thinking for it to be effective. In the wild we were impulsive and relied on our emotions to decide everything. Even when we are enthralled in the jungle of variations, we need to be masters of our mind and emotions rather than the other way around.

Leave assumptions at the door

Please don't be naïve. My goal with my exercises is always to trick you – which incidentally is also the goal of your next opponent. And yes, it is totally fair.

Check the move order

Your ideas may be right, but the move order could be wrong. You can see this as a section under *Comparison* if you like.

When you have made up your mind, execute your move!

Many people continue thinking after they have decided on what move they want to make. The less obvious drawback is at times they change their mind only to choose moves inferior to their first decision! Even if they avoid this they still end in time trouble later on...

End each variation with a definite conclusion

You will find it much easier to make a decision at the end if you have a firm evaluation of each line. Most people used to use the *Chess Informant* system as used throughout this book (see page 4). Others a scale from 1-10 (Lev Alburt recommended this). These days I think the young guys are giving it a computer-like evaluation.

Anything that feels natural to you is my recommendation.

Calculate only until you can make a definite conclusion

It is bonkers to spend your precious time going deeper.

Calculate half a move longer

We have a tendency to make conclusions after the moves that come naturally to us. Make it a habit to look for candidates for a brief moment to avoid nasty surprises. Incidentally this is probably the greatest antidote to traps I can think of!

What could I have missed?

If you feel you are banging your head against an unyielding wall, you might simply be too far down the track already having missed the turn. Don't be afraid to go back when sensible, but also do not run in circles.

Recheck your analysis

Don't be afraid to cover the same ground twice, especially if you have calculated other lines in the interim. Maybe there are ideas from one line that can be used in another.

Seek clear simple solutions in winning positions

And look for the opposite in lost positions.

We all underestimate the amount of chances we have all the time

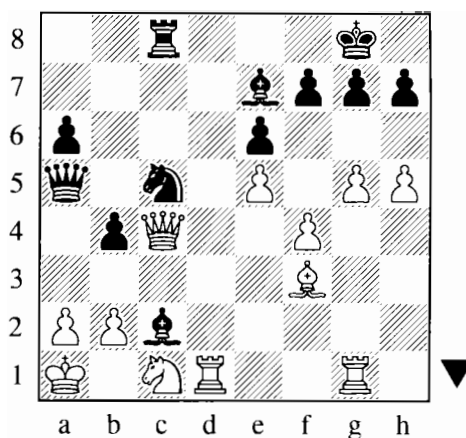
Computers shock us constantly with the missed wins and draws in our games. It happens to Carlsen as well as to you – just not as frequently! The lesson from this is never to give up. Instead of focusing on the win that got away or the impending doom of the defeat, focus on what you can change and control, your own effort at the board. **If the next move you play is a good one, you are a success.**

Chapter 1

Candidate Moves

Pogos Nakhapetiane – Sergei Zhigalko

Olginka 2011



Black to play

Black had just given up the exchange to regain his earlier sacrificed pawn. Seemingly he was so glad about this that he failed to actually *look* at the position and the opportunities he has in it.

Alexander Kotov famously introduced the idea of candidate moves into chess literature in *Think Like a Grandmaster*. The idea is simple and powerful. Rather than calculating endlessly on his first genius inspiration, Kotov suggested that the strong chess player would instead apply a bit of structure to his thinking and look for options first.

Kotov then went from this sound position to a land of trees and mechanical thinking that no one has returned to with their sanity intact. We shall not repeat this mistake.

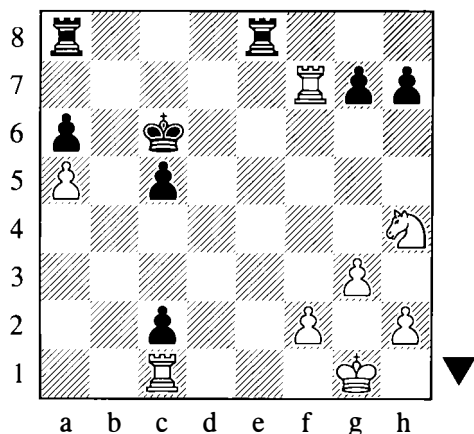
Instead we shall focus on **candidate moves and ideas** as a simple technique to become more creative. The idea is simple (as it should be). By focusing on looking for ideas that have not revealed themselves at once to our divine selves, we open up for our human ability to discover something new – in this case about the position right in front of us.

In my previous book on calculation, *Excelling at Chess Calculation*, I called the first chapter ***Before you can think, you need to learn how to see***. This is what candidates are all about.

Let's start with a simple example.

David Berczes – Hans Tikkanen

Stockholm 2010



Black is a piece down and lost a long ending after 28...Rxe2? 29.♘f3 ♜ae8 30.♙f1 without real counterplay. If Tikkanen had used this moment to look at the position instead of thinking, chances are that he would have seen a much better move.

28...Rxe1!

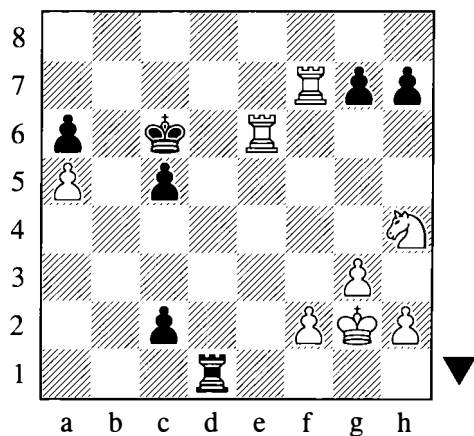
Quite a surprising move if you have not spent a few moments looking at it. But once you see it, the idea is obvious. White cannot prevent Black from making something of his only asset and promoting the pawn.

29.♜xe1 ♜d8!

A bit of accuracy. Obviously this decision can be classified as comparison, but in the end all calculation techniques are based on looking for moves we have not seen immediately.

The point is of course that 29...♜b8? would land the rook on the wrong side of the pawn and allow White to eliminate it with 30.♜fe7! ♜b1 31.♜7e6† ♙c7 32.♜6e2, when the extra piece will guarantee him an extra point.

30.♙g2 ♜d1 31.♜e6†!



Black is now faced with a trickier decision, but no doubt it would be one Tikkanen would have been grateful to be allowed to make.

31...♖d6!

Black would be swimming in shark-infested waters after 31...♗d5?! 32.♖b6 c1=♔ 33.♕f5! ♖g1† 34.♗h3 ♔f1† 35.♗h4 ♔c4† 36.♗g5 with great dangers for the black king.

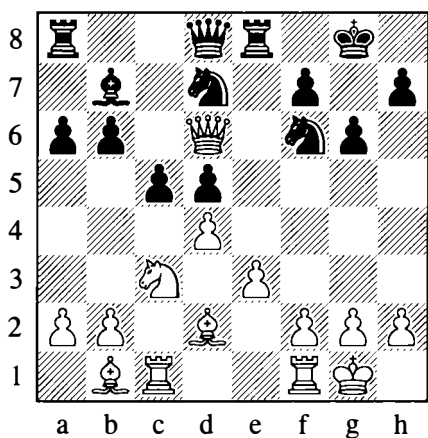
32.♖e2 c1=♔ 33.♕f3±

White has the advantage, but the game would have been open to three results.

The concept of looking for candidates as a specific conscious act is quite helpful.

Ivan Sokolov – Nikola Mitkov

Las Vegas 2011



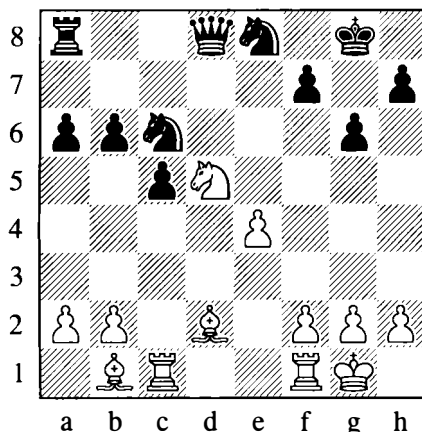
In the game Black played 17...♗e4, a sound-looking move, which more or less equalized. The game went on and he lost on move 31.

Without claiming to be a fortune teller, I predict things would have worked out better for him if he had been a bit more imaginative in this position and realized that the white queen is potentially in trouble. There is of course no way to know if Mitkov tried to look for ideas right here or not. Maybe he did and was unsuccessful. This happens and is why we train.

17...♖e5!!

This would have been stronger. The white queen is trapped and Black has the easier game.

18.dxe5 ♗e8 19.♔xd5 ♗xd5 20.♕xd5 ♗xe5 21.e4 ♗c6

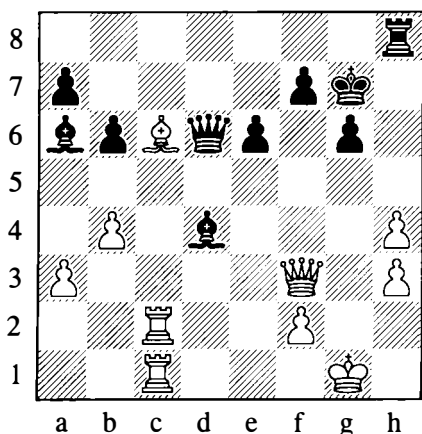


There is no guarantee that Black would not have lost this position as well, but the chances are far less and it would require more mistakes than it did in the game.

The candidates technique is not just about flashy moves that happen once in every 5-10 games (or less often if you are really really dull), but also about being open to simple ideas that do not come to you immediately.

Robert Kempinski – Radosław Wojtaszek

European Rapid Ch. Warsaw 2010



White has won the exchange, but Black has a lot of compensation. At least it appeared that way until he was faced with:

29.b5! ♖c8 30.♙c8!

This little move forces a much desired simplification. This is not a difficult tactic, but it is very effective. Without it the chances would have been more or less even.

30...♜xe8 31.♜xc8 ♜xc8 32.♜xc8

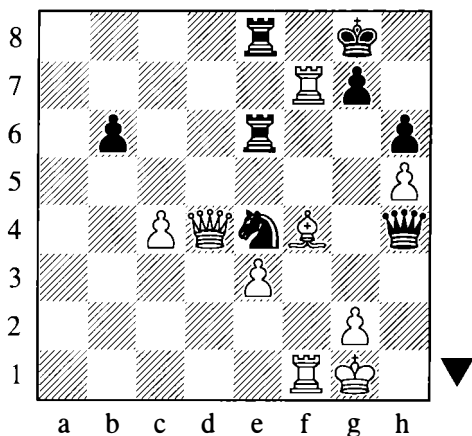
The activity is gone and White won on move 46.

Surprising moves can appear at any point in a game. They give us extra options to choose from. But how do we learn to find them? There are only two aspects to it. The first is to be conscious of our need to do it and the other is practice.

The only additional hint I would give is to understand that this is a very difficult part of chess and that you should never be too hard on yourself. Even the strongest players in the world miss strong candidates again and again.

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov – Francisco Vallejo Pons

Beijing (rapid) 2011

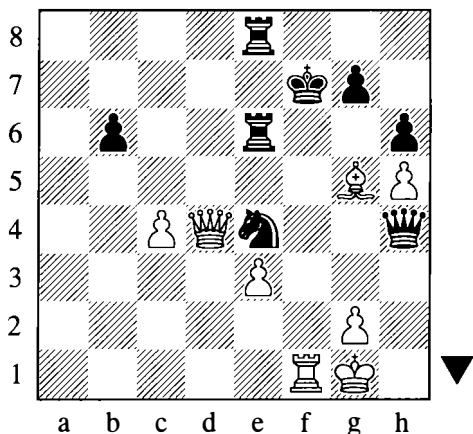


In the game Black played 35...♜g4? and after 36.♜b7± the position was deeply unpleasant for him. Eventually he lost on move 54.

The obvious move was of course to take the rook, but this is easy to reject because the queen is lost. At least this is how I think Vallejo was thinking during the game (and probably his opponent as well). In reality it is not so simple.

35...♜xf7! 36.♙g5†

36.♙g5† ♜f6! would not be better. It is not clear at all that White has the advantage.



36...♜f2! 37.♜xf2† ♜xf2 38.♙xh6 ♜h3† 39.gxh3 ♜xh6

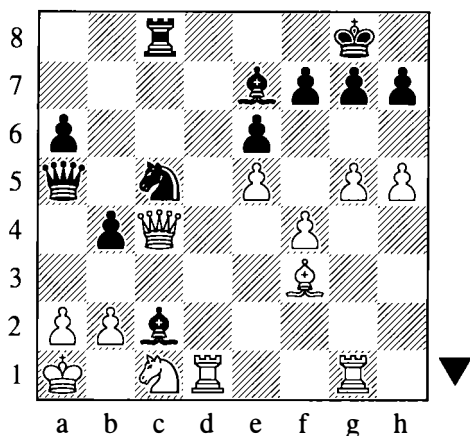
White cannot win this endgame.

This is not a difficult tactic to see – once you are looking. It is the looking part that went wrong for Vallejo, who at times has produced some of the most amazing tactics you can imagine.

And it is the looking it is all about. In the example given at the start of the chapter, Black has an obvious candidate in taking the rook. But we should not reduce ourselves to mindless zombies and just take the rook because it is there. Maybe this one time our bishop is more valuable?

Pogos Nakhapetiane – Sergei Zhigalko

Olginka 2011



Zhigalko has impressed me for a long time. He is on the unofficial watch list in the office at Quality Chess, but this time he disappointed.

After 27... \mathfrak{x} d1 28. \mathfrak{g} xd1± he did manage to draw the game on move 42, but still this was a rather feeble effort.

27...♔a4!!

This was the right move. White does not have a good defence against the knight check on b3 and will have to give up his queen

in a moment. There are details and variations and maybe White is not entirely lost if he defends energetically with his knight and rook for the queen.

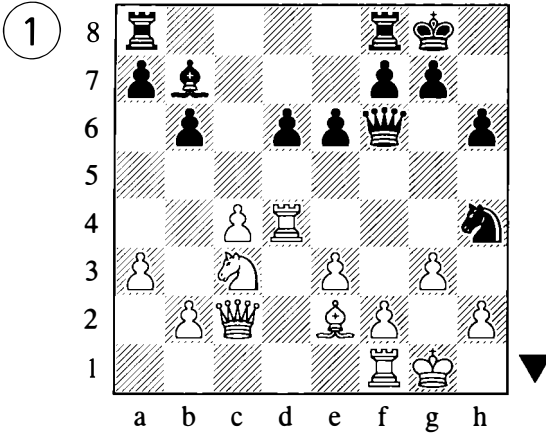
But honestly, no one cares. Black wins the queen and then we worry about what to do with it afterwards. Zhigalko missed this one-mover and even had a few problems to solve afterwards...

So why did he overlook this possibility? Probably he assumed there was nothing else. He did not look. Or to be a bit more technical: he did not take the time to look. And taking the time to look is what it is all about. Slow down your calculation of long lines and make sure it is not all horse manure by making sure you are calculating the right moves in the first place.

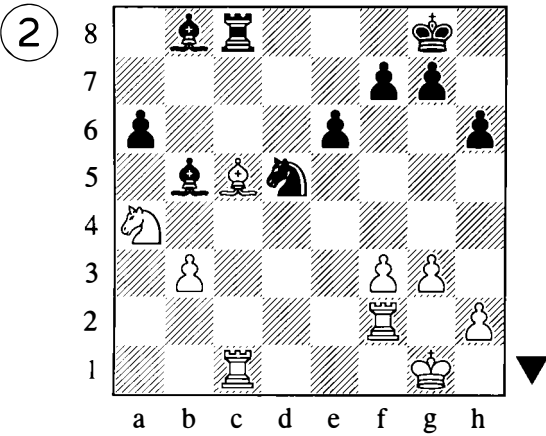
Working on your ability to spot extra opportunities is really important and the cornerstone of calculation.

The following section is the largest of all the exercise sections for a reason. I hope that reason is that you are going to improve your tactics dramatically by acquiring the habit of looking for extra options at all important moments.

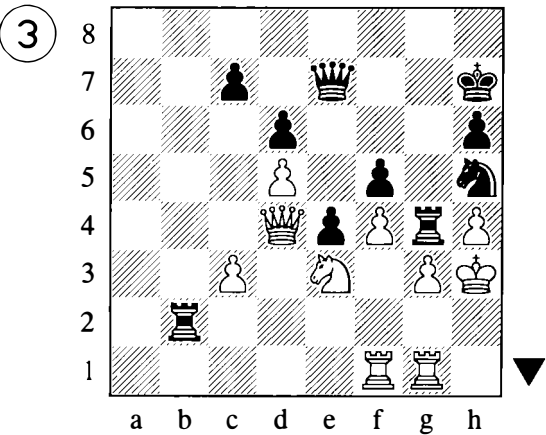
Golod – Gerzhoy, Philadelphia 2011



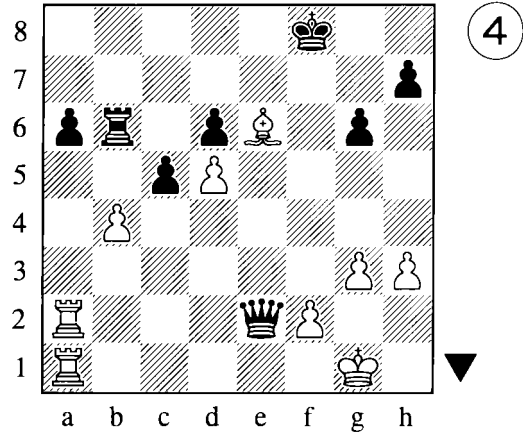
Romanko – Shulakova, Moscow 2012



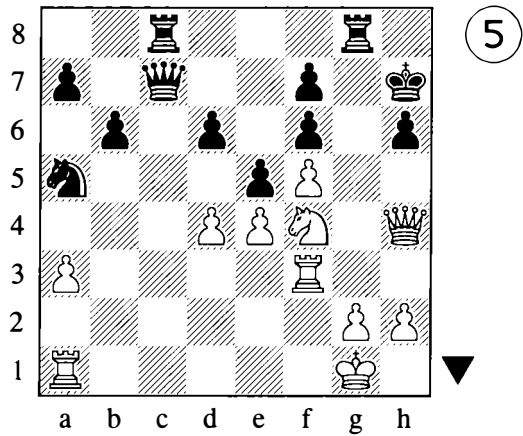
A. Hunt – Galdunts, Gold Coast 2000



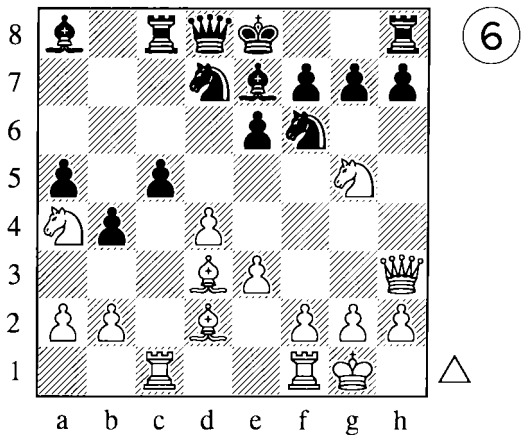
Navara – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2012

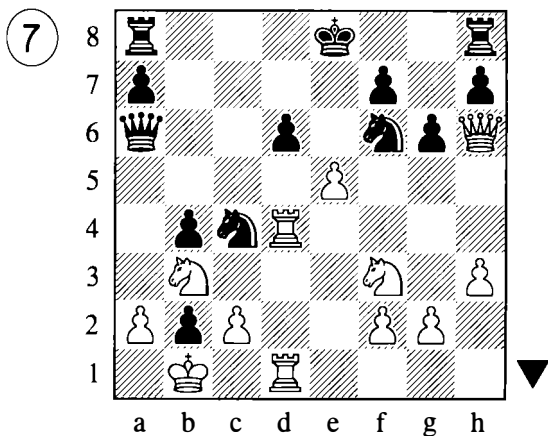
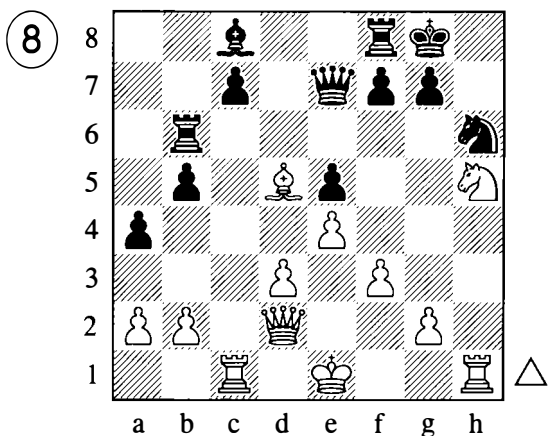
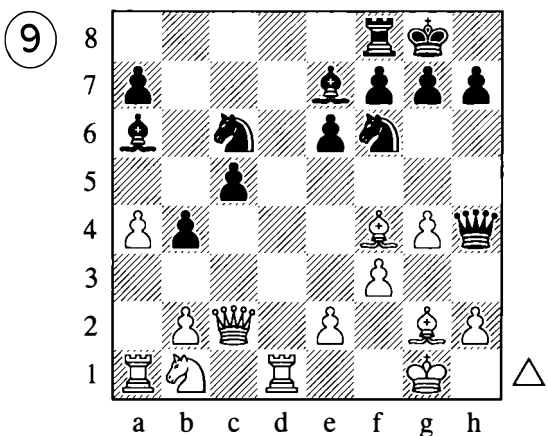
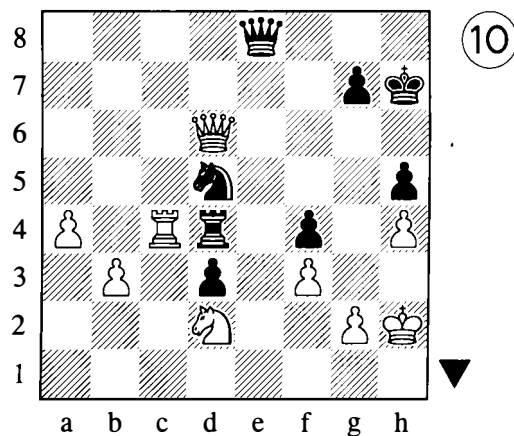
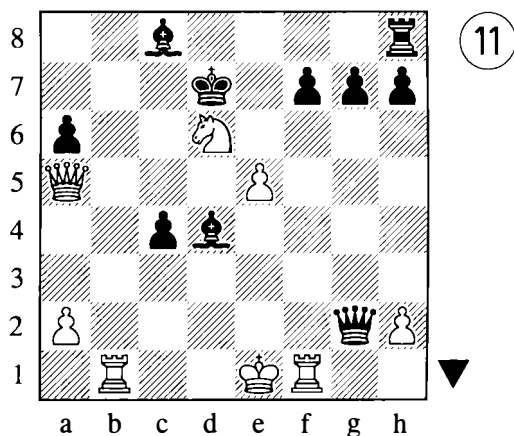
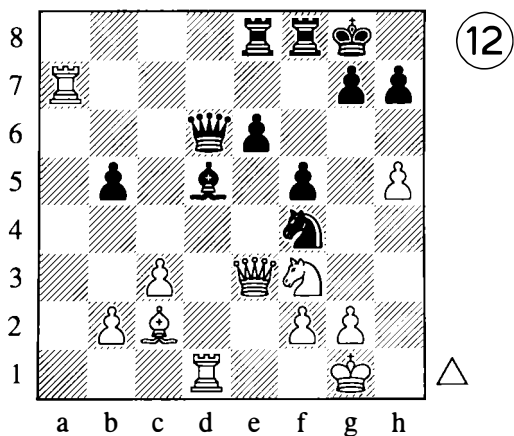


Nebolsina – N. Kosintseva, Moscow 2010



Fressinet – Brunner, Mulhouse 2011



Areshchenko – Shoker, Ningbo 2011**Gashimov – Navara**, Wijk aan Zee 2012**El Debs – Valhondo Morales**, Gibraltar 2012**Brandenburg – Grover**, Wijk aan Zee 2012**B. Smith – Laznicka**, Philadelphia 2010**Baklan – Getz**, Reykjavik 2011

1. Golod – Gerzhoy, Philadelphia 2011

18...♟f3! White resigned. 0–1

2. Romanko – Shulakova, Moscow 2012

Black missed a direct win, after getting the first move right. 34...♙xa4 35.bxa4 ♙a7! It is important to throw in this move. In the game Black played 35...♘b4? and eventually only drew after 65 moves. White did not reply in the most accurate way here, as simply 36.♙d1! would have solved all of her worries at once and maybe even made Black's practical experience a bit troublesome. 36.♙fc2 ♘b4 This works now. Most likely Black overlooked the idea of ...♙xc5 and ...♘d3. 37.♙xa7 This is forced, but after 37...♘xc2 Black will win the game with perfect play.

3. A. Hunt – Galdunts, Gold Coast 2000

Sorry, I could not resist this one. 47...♙xh4! Or queen takes first. 48.gxh4 ♟xh4† 49.♙xh4 ♙h2#

4. Navara – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2012

Black is doing quite well, but how to make the most of it? 33...♟e4! That's how. White does not have time for 34.bxc5 because of 34...♙b1†. 34.♙xa6 34.♙h2 cxb4 35.♙xa6 does not work as a concept. After 35...♙xa6 36.♙xa6 b3 37.♙b6 ♟c2 Black just wins. 34...♙xa6 35.♙xa6 c4! This is good enough, but there is no reason to decline the pawn. 35...cxb4 36.♙b6 ♟b1† 37.♙h2 b3 and Black wins. 36.♙c6 c3 37.♙c8† ♙g7 38.♙c7† ♙f6 39.♙h2 ♟d4 40.f4 Hoping... 40...g5 41.fxg5† ♙e5 0–1

5. Nebolsina – N. Kosintseva, Moscow 2010

White was no doubt hoping that ♙h3 would do the job. Or at least ♘h5xf6. But she was met with a cold shower... 22...♟c4! Threatening ...♟xd4†. 23.♙e1 After 23.♙d1 Black wins an important tempo with 23...♟c2!, so that after 24.♙df1 she has time to play 24...exf4–+. 23...♟xd4† 24.♙h1 ♟d2 With the point 25.♙h3 ♟xf4!. 25.♘e2 ♙g4! 26.♟f2 ♙xe4 0–1

6. Fressinet – Brunner, Mulhouse 2011

White obviously has a fine position, but how is he to exploit it? 16.♙fd1 looks natural, but something more direct exists. 16.♙g6!! The bishop is mysteriously immune and Black is just lost. 16...0–0 17.♙xh7† ♙h8 18.dxc5 There are other good moves, but who is counting? 18...♘xc5 19.♘xc5 ♙xc5 19...♙xc5 20.♙c4! would also quickly spell T.H.E. E.N.D. 20.♙xc5 ♙xc5 21.♙g6† ♙g8 22.♙xf7! The final trick. 22...♙xf7 23.♟h8†! 1–0

7. Areshchenko – Shoker, Ningbo 2011

23...♙c8! Making use of White's inability to defend the c2-square. 23...♘a3† 24.♙xb2 ♙c8 also looks strong, but then White can defend c2 with either 25.♙c1 or 25.♙1d2, in both cases with mutual chances. Against the latter, Black has to force a draw with: 25...♘b5 26.exf6 ♟a3† 27.♙a1 ♘c3 28.♟e3† ♙f8 29.♟h6† ♙e8= 24.exf6 24.♙xc4 ♟xc4 25.♘fd4 could be tried, but after 25...dxe5 26.♟g7 exd4 27.♘xd4 ♙e7 28.♙e1† ♙d7 29.♟xf6 ♙he8 Black wins all the same. 24...♘a3† 25.♙xb2 ♙xc2† 26.♙a1 ♘c4! The point. White sorely wanted to have time to return to the scene of action with 27.♟e3†. 27.♙e4† ♙d8 28.♘c1 ♟a3 0–1

8. Gashimov – Navara, Wijk aan Zee 2012

25.♖xc7! Amazingly Gashimov missed his chance and only drew on move 40 after: **25.g4? ♜g6 26.♘g3± 25...♞xc7** The objectively best defence of **25...♞d6** loses slowly to almost anything. **26.♞g5 g6** Perhaps Gashimov's chess blindness was related to **26...♜g6 27.♞xg6! 27.♞xh6 gxh5 28.♞g5†** Black is mated.

9. El Debs – Valhondo Morales, Gibraltar 2012

The unprotected knight on c6 is a target. **18.♙g3 ♖h6 19.g5! ♞xg5 20.f4 ♞g4 21.♙xc6±** White won on move 68, although some difficulties persists here.

10. Brandenburg – Grover, Wijk aan Zee 2012

This game was drawn after a comedy of errors. In reply to **57...♖xc4?** White could have taken with the pawn and been winning, but instead played **58.♘xc4?**, allowing **58...♞e1! 59.♞xd5 ♞g3† 60.♙g1** with perpetual check.

But Black could have won with the immediate **57...♞e1!** with the point **58.♖xd4 ♞g3† 59.♙h1 ♘e3** and White is mated.

11. B. Smith – Laznicka, Philadelphia 2010

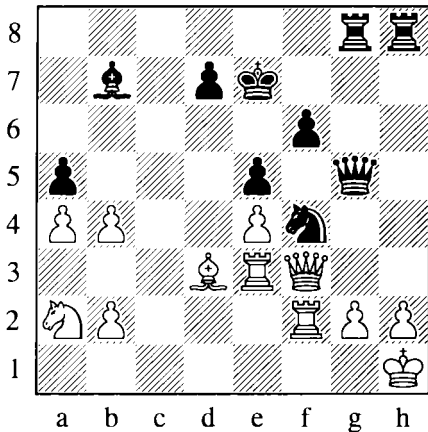
After **27...♙e6?** the game was massively unclear. Black won on move 47 after mutual failings. But at this point Black missed the chance to win the game with: **27...♞c2!** with the very strong threat of **...♙c3†**. I suspect he was too focused on king safety! A possible line could be: **28.♖xf7† ♙e6 29.♖b4!? ♙c3† 30.♙f1 ♞d1† 31.♙g2 ♞d2†** and Black wins a piece.

12. Baklan – Getz, Reykjavik 2011

White was able to ruin the black position with a simple move: **26.h6! ♜f6 26...gxh6 27.♘e5** just wins. White will play **♞xh6** shortly. **26...♜f7 27.♖xf7 ♘xf7 28.♙xf5!** wins for White. The h-pawn proves itself useful in the line: **28...exf5 29.♘g5† ♘f8 30.hxg7†** and wins. Finally, **26...g6 27.♞g7† ♘h8 28.♞a7** is just mate. **27.♖xg7† ♘h8 28.♘e5 ♘g6 29.♘f7† ♖xf7 30.♖xf7 ♖g8 31.♞a7 ♘e7 32.♙e4 fxe4 33.♖xe7 ♖xg2† 34.♘xg2 e3† 35.♙h3 1-0**

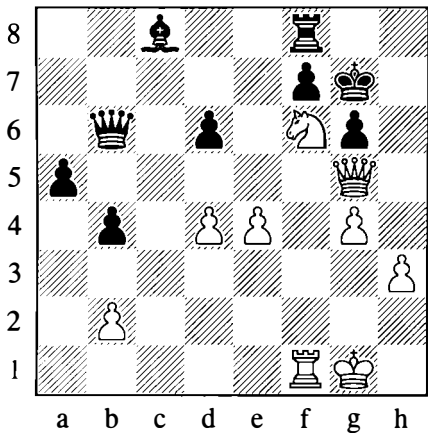
Stany – Venkatesh, New Delhi 2010

13



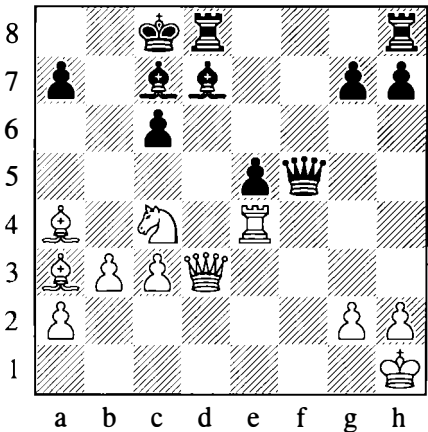
Shimanov – A. Vovk, Konya 2011

14



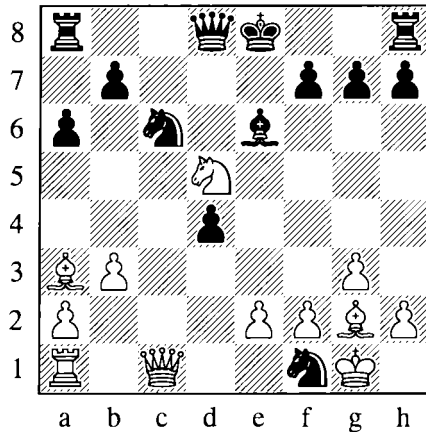
Ljubojevic – Durao, Orense 1974

15



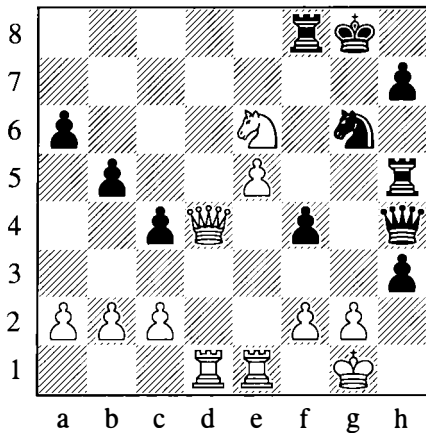
M. Krylov – Yaksin, Moscow 2010

16



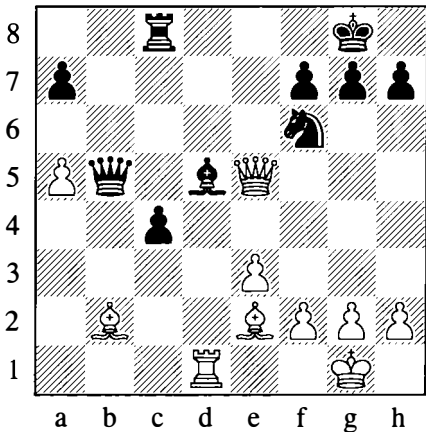
Inarkiev – Moiseenko, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

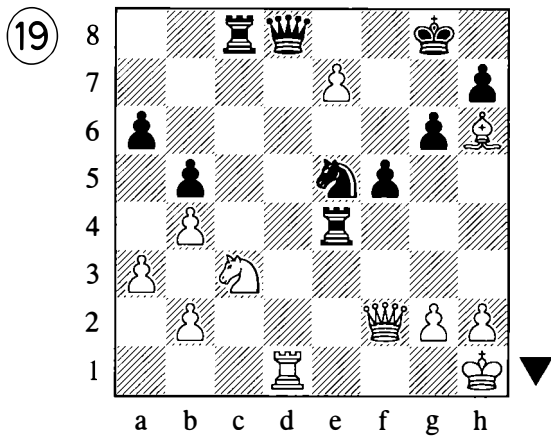
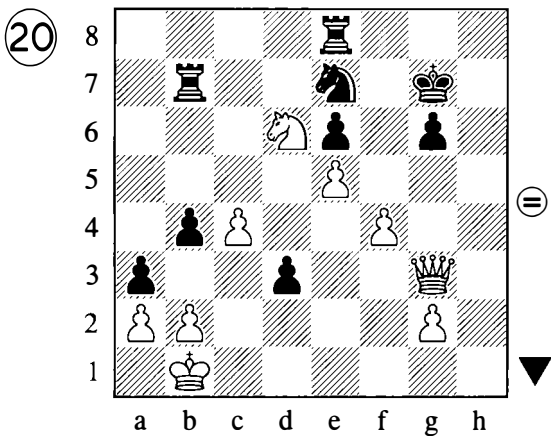
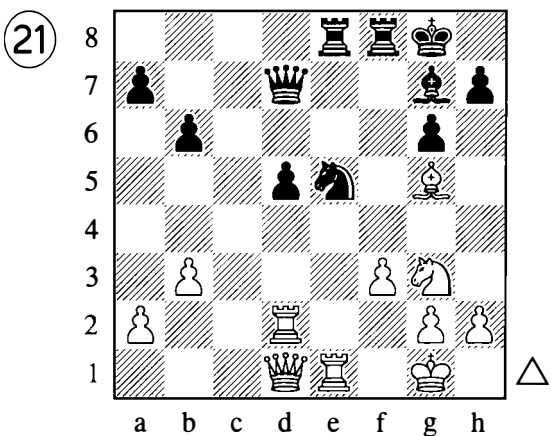
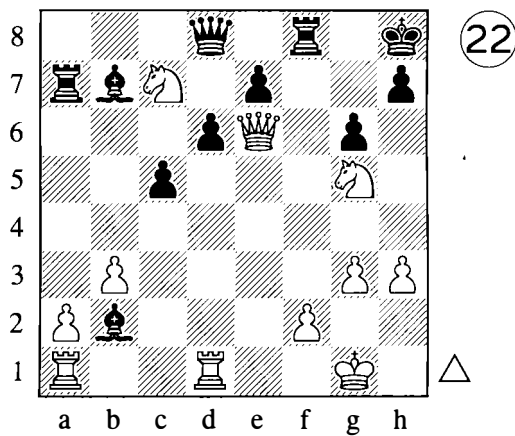
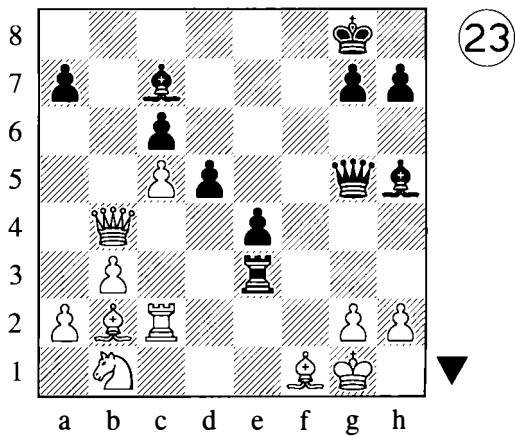
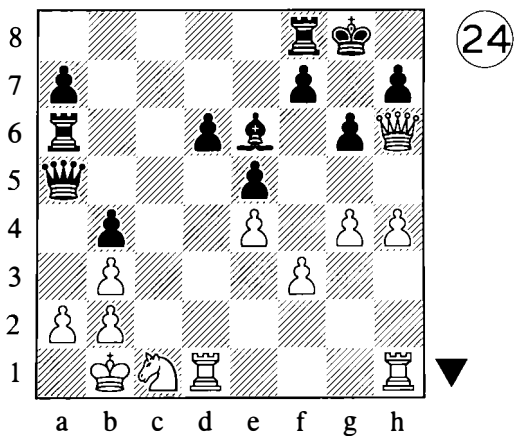
17



M. Gurevich – Aagaard, Torrelavega 2007

18



Ni Hua – Aagaard, Turin (ol) 2006**Greet – Thompson, Hinckley Island 2011****Sammalvuori – Ziska, Klaksvik 2010****Lalic – Vorobiov, Cappelle la Grande 2012****Claverie – Aagaard, Budapest 2002****Borner – Pavlovic, Winterthur 2010**

13. Stany – Venkatesh, New Delhi 2010

Black missed a simple double threat. **30...♖xd3!** In the game, after 30...d5? 31.exd5 ♗xd5 White could have defended with 32.♗e4 instead of losing the g2-pawn and the game instantly... **31.♗xd3 ♖h4!** Black wins: **32.g3 ♖xe4**

14. Shimanov – A. Vovk, Konya 2011

42.♖e8†! 42.♖h5† ♖h7 does not lead anywhere. For example, after 43.♖f6 gxf5 White has to pull his socks up and find 44.♖f5! to secure a draw. **42...♖xe8** 42...♖h7 is no longer possible; after 43.♖h4† the mate is obvious. After 42...♖g8 43.♖f6! Black can only stop mate by giving up his queen. **43.♖f6† ♖h6** **44.g5†** 44.♖f4†! was also a nice way to win. **44...♖h5** **45.♖g7** Black resigned because of 45...♖xg5 46.♖f6† ♖h6 47.♖f4 and Black has to give up his queen to avoid being mated. **1–0**

15. Ljubojevic – Durao, Orense 1974

22.♖e3 is good for White, but there can be no excuses for missing the direct win: **22.♖d6†!** **♗xd6** **23.♖a6† ♖c7** 23...♖b8 24.♗xd6† ♖a8 25.♖xc6† ♗xc6 26.♗xc6# **24.♖xa7† ♖c8** **25.♗b5!** Black resigned. After 25...♖df8 26.♖a8† ♗b8 27.♗a6† White wins material, while 25...cxb5 leads to mate: 26.♖a6† ♖b8 27.♗xd6# **1–0**

16. M. Krylov – Yaksin, Moscow 2010

White has to save the game with a drawing combination. **17.♖f6†!** In the game, after 17.♖f4?! ♖c8? White was on the back foot and lost on move 61. **17...gxf6** 17...♖xf6? 18.♗xc6† ♗d7 19.♗xb7 ♖d8 20.♖xf1 favours White. Exactly how much is a debate between the various engines I am using. **18.♗xc6† bxc6** **19.♖xc6† ♗d7** **20.♖e4† ♗e6** **21.♖c6†** With a perpetual check.

17. Inarkiev – Moiseenko, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

White missed the direct win because a tempting move looked available. This was a rapid game so it is easy to understand why! **31.♖d7!** In the game, after 31.♖xf8? hxg2 32.♖d5† ♖xf8 33.♖d8† ♖xd8 34.♗xd8† ♖e7 35.♖ed1 White had won the exchange, but 35...f3 left him very close to being checkmated. He did not find a way out, only a way to delay resigning till move 49. **31...♖f7** **32.♖c8†!** 32.♖d8† ♖f8 is less clear, although White should still win. **32...♖f8** **33.♖d8** Black does not have time for his counterplay. **33...♖hf5** **34.♖xf8 ♖xf8** **35.♖xf5 ♖xd8** **36.gxh3** White is in control and should win.

18. M. Gurevich – Aagaard, Torrelavega 2007

After 26.♗c3?± I had to struggle on till move 97 before I could claim the draw. Had he instead played **26.♖f5!** I would have been spared the suffering, as only resigns makes sense here.

19. Ni Hua – Aagaard, Turin (ol) 2006

I still cannot believe that I missed the chance to win here: **28...♖xe7?** 29.♖xe4 ♖g4 30.♖d4 fxe4 31.♖d5† ♖f7 32.♖d8† ♖e8! Somehow he had believed he was winning, missing this move. 33.♖d5† ♖f7 34.♖d8† ♖e8 35.♖c7 ½–½

The chance I missed was: **28...♖xd1†!** **29.♖xd1 ♖d3!** and Black just wins.

20. Greet – Thompson, Hinckley Island 2011

37...**♟h8!** would have saved the game and even set up a nasty trap. Instead White won after: 37...d2? 38.♟xe8† ♜f8 39.♟d3 ♜xe8 40.♟xd2 axb2 41.♜xb2 ♟f5 42.g4 ♟e7 43.♟d6 ♜f7 44.♜b3 1–0 **38.♟xd3?** This is what Andrew was planning to play. After 38.♟e1 ♟bb8 39.b3 ♟h2! White must play carefully to draw: 40.♜c1 ♟xg2 41.♟h4! **38...♟h1† 39.♜c2** Both players apparently rejected this as hopeless for Black, but in fact he is winning: **39...b3†!**

21. Sammalvuo – Ziska, Klaksvik 2010

In this seemingly equal position White had a surprising move that took care of the d5-pawn immediately. **28.♟e4!** There is a bit of prophylactic thinking behind this move. After 28.♟ee2? the rook would also be protected, but Black could then play 28...d4! and avoid losing the pawn. **28...d4** Otherwise ♟xd5 follows. **29.♟dxd4 ♟c7 30.♟d5 ♟f7 31.♟d7 ♟c5† 32.♟e3 ♟a5 33.♟xf7 1–0**

22. Lalic – Vorobiov, Cappelle la Grande 2012

24.♟f7!! 24.♟f7†? ♟xf7 25.♟xf7 ♟c6± **24...♟g7** This is the principled defence, though clearly it does not work. In the game Black accepted his fate and went down after: 24...♟xf7 25.♟xf7† ♜g8 26.♟xd8 ♟f3 27.♟de6 ♟xd1 28.♟xd1 ♟xa2 29.♟d3 1–0 **25.♟ce6** White wins. Obviously the queen is hanging and it is possible that the players did not even spot the possible finish: **25...♟g8 26.♟xg6!! hxg6 27.♟f7† ♜h7 28.♟eg5#**

23. Claverie – Aagaard, Budapest 2002

I was ill all the way through this tournament, but still had some interesting games. Here I won after sacrificing some pieces, but only as a result of receiving assistance. I played **23...♟f4?** 24.g3 ♟xg3† 25.hxg3 ♟e3† 26.♟f2 ♟xg3† 27.♟g2 ♟e3† 28.♟f2 ♟g3† ready for a draw. But he wanted to win: 29.♟g2!?! e3 30.♟e1 ♟g6! Here 31.♟e2 is a possible move. Black would have to give perpetual check. Instead he blundered the queen... 31.♟d2?? exf2† 32.♟xf2 ♟h2† 33.♜f1 ♟d3† 34.♜e1 ♟g3 0–1

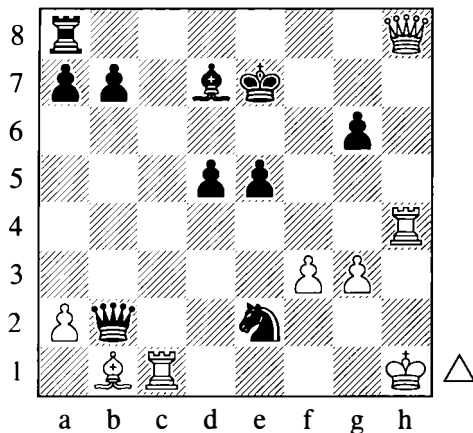
Instead, **23...♟h3!** would have won the game in short order. The h2-square is the weakness and here it is just dead. After **24.g3 ♟e3† 25.♟f2** the rook is better placed and Black can play **25...♟xh2!**, winning instantly.

24. Borner – Pavlovic, Winterthur 2010

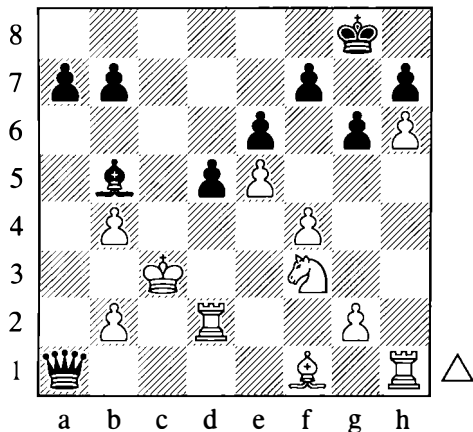
22...♟xb3! This sacrifice is deeply tempting once you see it. Calculating the consequences does not seem too much of a strain. Black also had a strong option in 22...♟c8! 23.♟e3 ♟xc1† 24.♜xc1 ♟xa2 with powerful compensation for the exchange, but the text move is both better and more inventive. **23.h5** The most important point is of course that 23.axb3 ♟c8! is instant mate. 23.♟xb3 ♟xa2† 24.♜c2 ♟c8† is obviously over immediately. **23...♟c8!** 23...♟xa2† also wins, but the text move is cleaner. **24.a3 ♟c2† 25.♜a2 bxa3 26.b4 ♟xb4 0–1**

Oleksienko – Gupta, New Delhi 2011

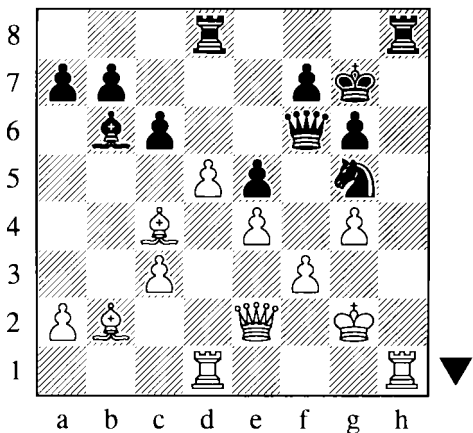
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**Svidler – Riazantsev, Russia (ch) 2008**

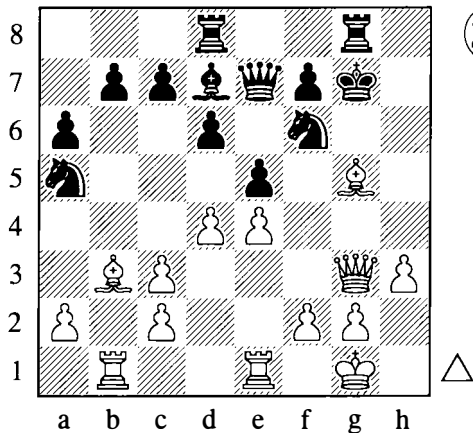
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**Andriasian – Bacrot, Warsaw (rapid) 2011**

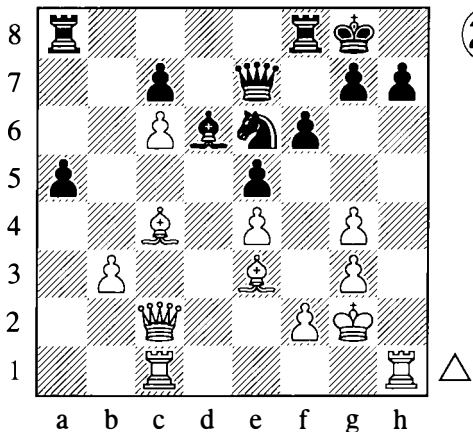
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**Rublevsky – Blagojevic, Valjevo 2011**

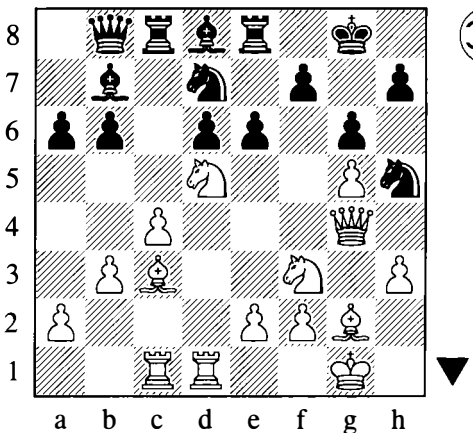
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**L.B. Hansen – Gulko, Copenhagen 2000**

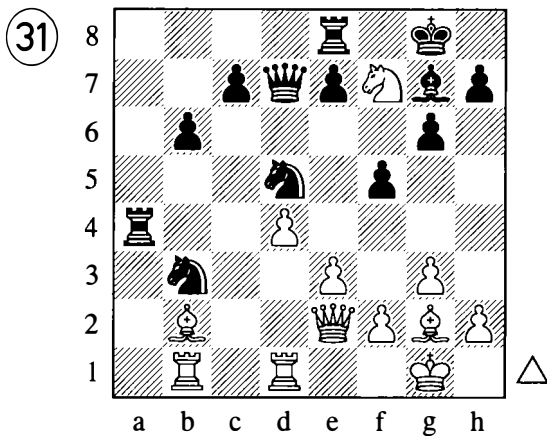
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**Panchanathan – Chirila, Richardson 2011**

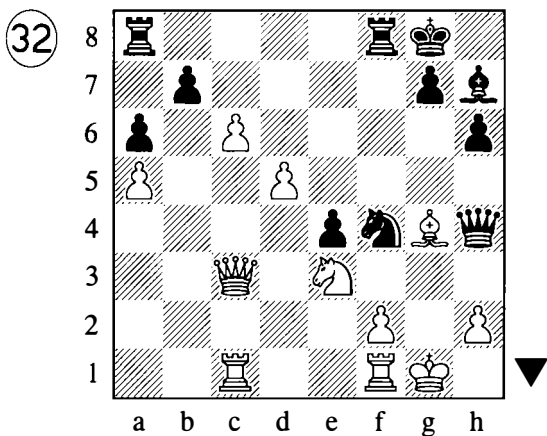
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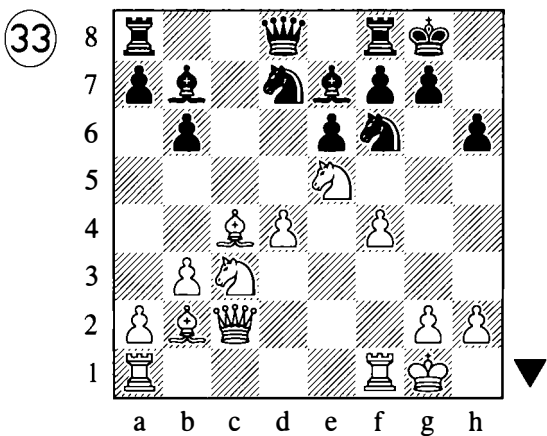
Harikrishna – So, Guangzhou 2010



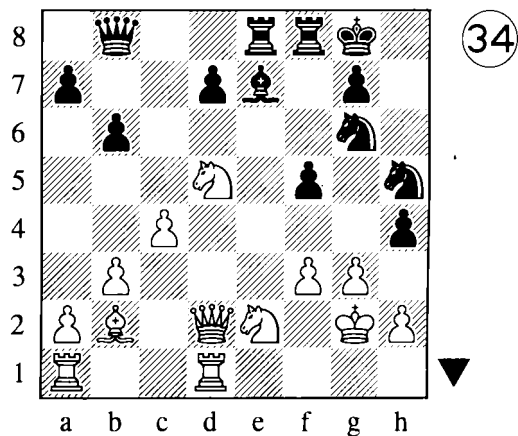
Perez Ponsa – Delgado Ramirez, Buenos Aires 2010



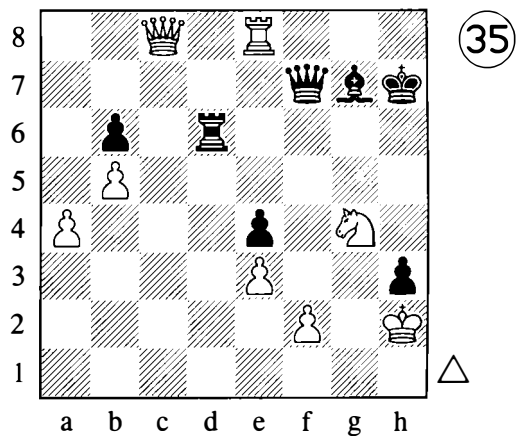
Kaidanov – Shankland, Saint Louis 2011



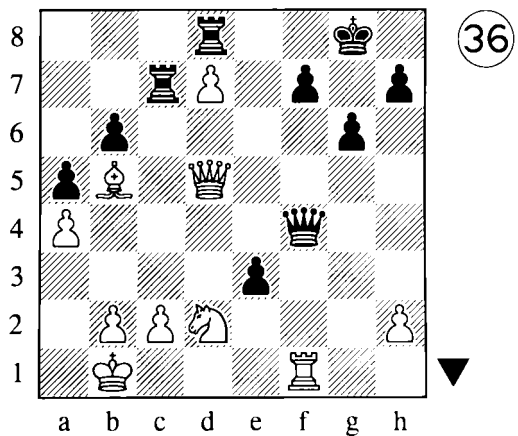
Nei – Gurgennidze, USSR (ch) 1967



Jaracz – Duda, Warsaw 2012



Efimenko – Forster, Porto Carras 2011



25. Oleksienko – Gupta, New Delhi 2011

28. ♖h7+ 28. ♖g7+? would fail to 28... ♗d6 29. ♖d1 ♗xg3+ 30. ♗g1 ♗e2+ with perpetual check. 28... ♗e6 29. ♖f5! The point. Black is mated after: 29... ♗xf5 30. ♖h6+ ♗e7 31. ♖f6+ ♗e8 32. ♖h8#

26. Svidler – Riazantsev, Russia (ch) 2008

25. ♗d4!± This ensures that White will keep an extra minor piece. 25... ♖xf1 26. ♖f2 26. ♗e3? has been suggested by several of my students, but after 26... ♖a6 the position is not clear. 26... ♖c1 26... ♖d1+ 27. ♗d2 also gives White an extra piece in the endgame. The extra black pawns will not be too influential. 27. ♖xf1?! 27. ♖hxf1! looks stronger. After 27... ♖xf4+ 28. ♗d3 ♖c4+ 29. ♗d2 ♖xb4+ 30. ♗d1 White has managed to keep his most important pawns and will win the game eventually. 27... ♖xf4+ 28. ♗d3 ♖e4+ 29. ♗d2 ♖xb4+ 30. ♗e3 ♖b6+? 30... f6!± would have resisted more: 31. exf6 e5!± 31. ♗f4± White won on move 38.

27. Andriasian – Bacrot, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

31... ♗h3! 31... ♖h3? would be the wrong choice, giving White the possibility of fighting back with 32. ♖c1! ♖xf3 33. ♖hf1 ♖f4!± 34. ♖xf4 exf4 35. e5 f3+ 36. ♖xf3 ♖xf3+ 37. ♖xf3 ♗xf3 38. ♗xf3 and the ending is drawn. 32. ♖c1 32. ♖hx3 ♖hx3 33. ♗hx3 ♖h8+ 34. ♗g2 ♖h4 leaves White with no way of avoiding mate. 32... ♗f2 33. g5 33. ♖hx8 ♖hx8 34. g5 ♖d8 is no improvement. For example: 35. ♖g1 ♖h2+ 36. ♗hx2 ♖h8+ 37. ♗g2 ♖h3# 33... ♖e7 34. ♖hx8 ♖hx8 35. ♖g1 ♖d7 35... ♗h3 with the idea ... ♗f4+ and later ... ♖xg5+ was an easy win as well. 36. ♗f1 ♖h2 37. ♖e3 ♖h3+ 38. ♗e1 ♖xe3 39. ♖xe3 ♖h4 40. ♗f1 ♗h3 41. ♖g4 ♖h1+ 42. ♗g2 ♗f4+ 43. ♖xf4 ♖h3+ 0-1

28. Rublevsky – Blagojevic, Valjevo 2011

White has many promising options, but with a bit of imagination can find a direct win: 20. ♖xf6! ♗xf6 21. ♖h4+ ♖g5 22. f4! exf4 23. ♖h6+! An important intermediate move. 23... ♖g6 24. e5+ dxe5 25. ♖h4+ The point. The white queen returns with this check once black has taken on e5. 25... ♖g5 26. ♖xe5 ♖dg8 27. ♖xf4+ Other moves win as well. 27... ♖f5 28. ♖xe7 1-0

29. L.B. Hansen – Gulko, Copenhagen 2000

33. f4! White wins directly by opening the diagonal from c4 to g8. In the game 33. ♖d1? also gave White some advantage, but eventually he managed only a draw in 43 moves. 33... ♗h8 34. f5 ♗g5 35. ♖xg5 fxg5 36. ♖xh7+ ♗xh7 37. ♖h1#

30. Panchanathan – Chirila, Richardson 2011

19... exd5! 20. ♖xd7 The queen appears to be in trouble on d7, but it is by driving it back that Black wins. 20... ♖c6! 20... ♖e7 21. ♖a4 ♗f4+ is also promising for Black, but the text move just wins. 21. ♖g4 ♖e4 Black won on move 30, but finishing here makes more sense.

31. Harikrishna – So, Guangzhou 2010

Black probably felt quite comfortable here until he was killed by a desperado. 22. ♗d6!! Black loses material. 22... ♖xd6 22... cxd6 23. ♖xd5+ and wins. 23. ♖b5 ♖d8 24. ♖xa4 ♗a5 25. ♖dc1 c6 26. ♖a3 ♖e6 27. ♖c5 ♗xe3 28. ♖xb6 ♗xg2 29. ♖xd8 f4 30. ♖xa5 ♗e3 31. ♖xc6 1-0

32. Perez Ponsa – Delgado Ramirez, Buenos Aires 2010

It is natural to pay attention to your opponent's actions, but we should not let our minds be dominated by them. Here Black missed a great moment because he was concerned about a simple threat to a pawn. **29...♙f5!!** This could have won immediately. It looks as if the bishop is en prise, but in reality it is exploiting the poor coordination in the White camp. In the game Black played **29...bxc6?** **30.dxc6 h5** and won luckily after **31.♙d7?? ♜e2†**. Instead White could have played **31.♙c4† ♜h8** **32.♙e6** when his position is not so desperate. **30.cxb7 ♖ab8** **31.♙c8** What else? **31...♙xg4** This seems simplest. **32.♙xg4 ♙xg4†** **33.♜xg4 ♜e2†** **34.♙g2 ♜xc1** **35.♖xc1 ♖xb7** Black is winning, on account of **36.♖c6?! ♖b2!**

33. Kaidanov – Shankland, Saint Louis 2011

14...♜xe5! 15.fxex5 **15.dxe5 ♙c5†** **16.♜h1 ♜g4** gives White no defence against the threats of **...♙h4, ...♜e3** and maybe even **...♜f2†**. **15...♙xd4†** **16.♜h1** White was relying on **16...♙xe5** **17.♜d5!**, which is dangerous even though it is not entirely clear whether White has enough. Instead he was hit by a thunderbolt: **16...♙h4!!** He now realized that **17.exf6** would lose instantly to **17...♙d6!** – but it is already too late. **17.♙c1?! 17.♙f2 ♙xf2** **18.♖xf2 ♜e4** would give Black more practical problems, but is still losing. **17...♜g4** **18.♙f4 ♙c5** **0–1**

34. Nei – Gurgienidze, USSR (ch) 1967

22...♙b4! A nice shot. The fork on f4 will win. **23.♙d3** **23.♜xb4 ♖xe2†** wins quickly. The same is the case with **23.♙c3 ♖xe2†!** **24.♙xe2 ♙xc3**. And **23.♙c2 ♖xe2†!** **24.♙xe2 hxg3** is hopeless for White too. **23...hxg3** **24.hxg3 ♖xe2†** **25.♙xe2 ♙xg3†** **26.♜f1 ♜gxf4** **27.♜xf4 ♜xf4** **28.♙f2 ♙h3†** **29.♙g1 ♙c5** **30.♙d4 ♖f6** **0–1**

35. Jaracz – Duda, Warsaw 2012

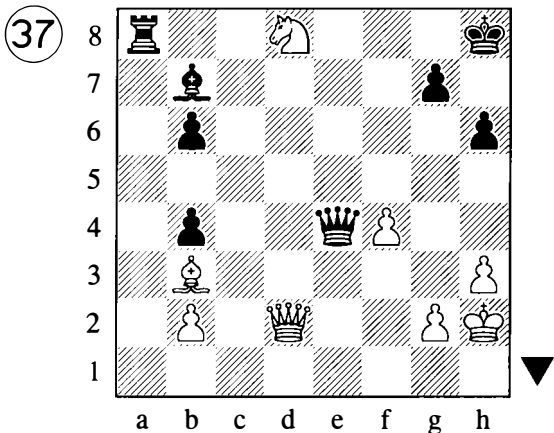
White wins with a nice little combination: **48.♙a8!** We have to remember that Black cannot exchange queens as White would just be a few pawns up in the endgame. Black must rely on obtaining counterplay, starting with **...♙f3**. **48...♙d5** **49.♖f8!** **49.♖e7?** looks smart, but does not prevent **49...♙f3!**, when after **50.♖xg7† ♜xg7** **51.♙b7† ♜f8** White only has a perpetual check. **49...♙e6** **49...♙h5** **50.♜f6†** and White wins on points. **49...♙xf8** **50.♙xd5** is of course White's main idea, with the additional detail **50...♙f3** **51.♙xe4†!**. **50.♖f4** White is in control and won on move 60.

36. Efimenko – Forster, Porto Carras 2011

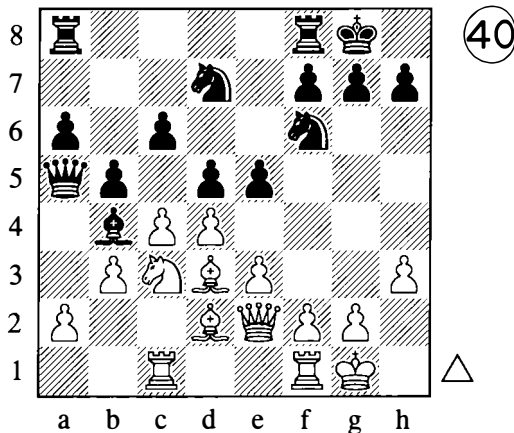
White had been on the way to winning, when he suddenly fell for a nice tactic. **27...♖xd7!** **28.♙xd7** It appears that White should also lose after: **28.♖xf4 ♖xd5** **29.♜f3 ♖f5!?** Exchanging the rooks is intended to reduce White's counterplay. (Another option is **29...♖xb5** **30.axb5 ♙d1†** **31.♜a2 ♖f1** **32.c4 e2** **33.♖e4 ♖xf3** **34.♖xe2 ♜f8**, but the outcome does not appear to be completely clear. The extra pawn on the queenside should give White some counterplay.) **30.♖xf5 ♙d1†** **31.♜a2 gxf5** **32.♜b3 f4** **33.♜c3 ♜g7** Black's advantage is considerable, but it is nevertheless difficult for him to make progress. **28...♙xf1†** **29.♜xf1 e2** **30.♙b5 e1=♙†** Black's advantage is maybe not major here, but being White sucks. **31.♜a2 ♙f2** **32.c3 h5** **33.♜g3 ♙xh2** **34.♜e4 ♙f4** **35.♙c6 h4** **36.♙xb6 ♙d1** **37.♙xa5?** **37.♙b3** would have resisted much better. **37...h3** **38.♙a8† ♜g7** **39.♙a7 h2** **40.♙f2 ♙c7** **41.♜g5 ♙xc6** **42.♙xf7† ♜h6** **43.♙f4 ♖a1†** **0–1**

Corrales Jimenez – Fedorchuk, Roquetas 2011

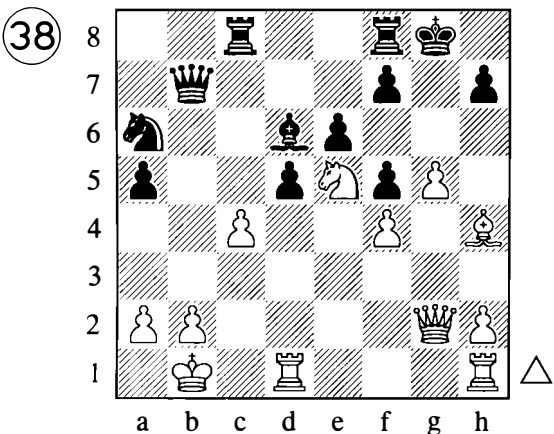
L'Ami – Jugelt, Germany 2011



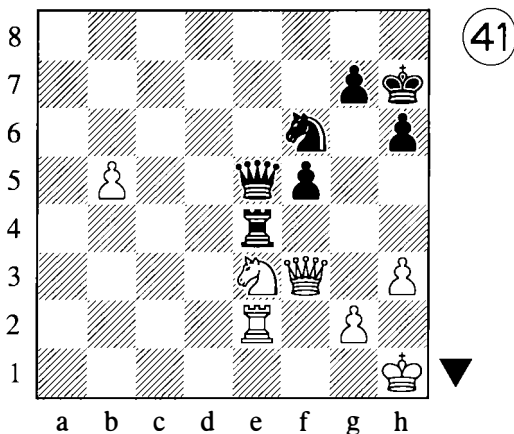
Salgado Lopez – Acs, Paks 2011



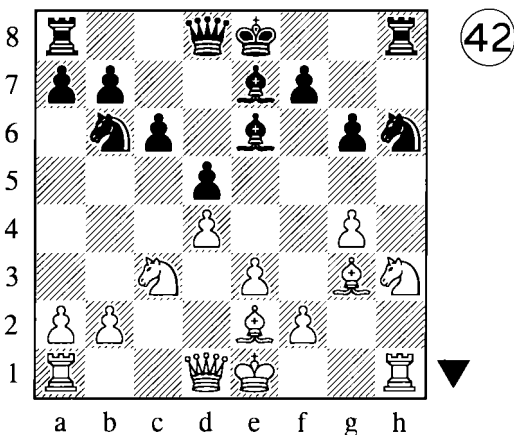
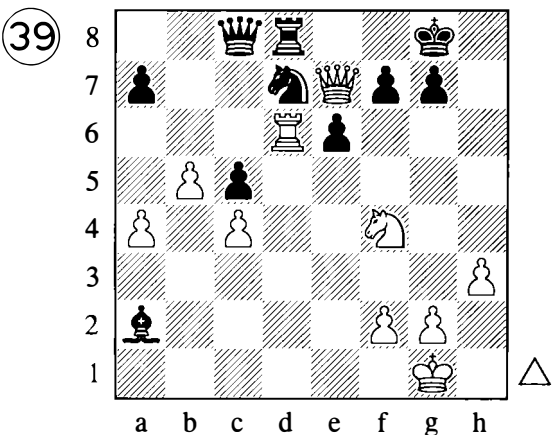
Swiercz – M. Yilmaz, Moscow 2012



Sjugirov – Korobov, Warsaw (rapid) 2011



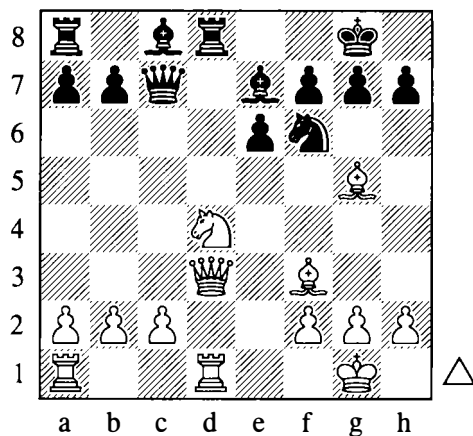
Nakamura – Aronian, Bilbao 2011



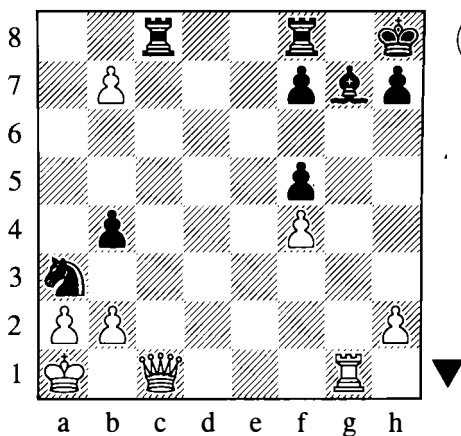
Najer – Lysyj, Ulan Ude 2009

Zhang Ziyang – Li Shilong, Xinghua Jiangsu 2011

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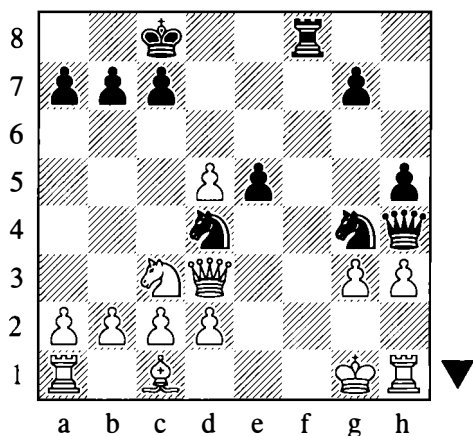
Traxler – from *Black Gambits 2*

46



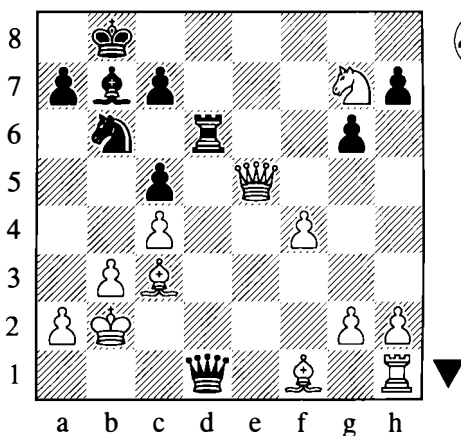
Kotsur – Volokitin, Moscow 2011

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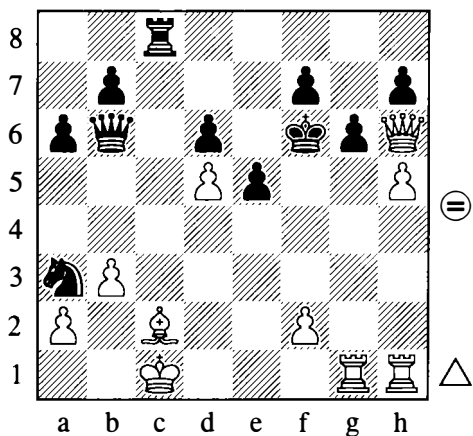


Praveen Kumar – Heberla, Mumbai 2011

47



45



37. Corrales Jimenez – Fedorchuk, Roquetas 2011

37...♙d5! A pleasing move that kills all counterplay. 37...g6 was not a bad alternative, but the text move wins instantly. 38.♙c2 38.♙xd5 ♜xd8 and Black wins. 38...♜xg2†! Conclusive, though 38...♜c4 also wins. 39.♜xg2 ♙xg2 40.♙f7† ♙g8 41.♙b3 ♙f1! 42.♙xh6† ♙f8 43.♙g4 b5 44.♙e5 ♙c4 45.♙xc4 bxc4 46.♙xc4 ♜c8 47.♙b3 ♜d8 48.♙e6 ♜d2† 49.♙g3 ♜xb2 50.♙f3 ♙e7 0–1

38. Salgado Lopez – Acs, Paks 2011

White's first move is not hard to spot, but the follow-up is a beauty. 25.g6! Without this White has no prospects at all. 25...fxg6 25...♙e5 26.gxh7† ♙xh7 is winning for White, as long as he does not fall for 27.♙f6? ♜xb2†!, when Black wins on points. 26.♙xg6 ♜g7 26...hxg6 27.♜xg6† ♜g7 28.♜xe6† is fairly straightforward. 27.♜e2!! The point. If Black takes the knight with his queen it is immediately lost, while otherwise one of his other pieces will be swiped off the board. 27...hxg6 28.♜xe6† ♙h7 29.♜xd6 White won on move 40.

39. Sjogirov – Korobov, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

White has sacrificed a piece and it is tempting to look for something active, but he has enough time to bring the knight to e5: 37.♙d3! 37.♜c6? ♜b8 does not give White anything better than 38.♜d6, begging for a second chance. But here Black can play 38...♙xc4! 39.♙h5 ♙d5 40.♜xd7 ♜xd7 41.♜xd7 ♜e5 and White should consider looking for a draw soon. 37...♙xc4 37...f6 38.♙f4! is rather nice. White just wins. 38...♙xc4 39.♙h5 and Black is mated. 38.♙e5 ♜f8 Here everything works. 39.♜xd7 ♙b3 40.♙xf7 40.♙g6! would have been sweet, but anything goes. 40...♙h7 41.♙g5† ♙g6 42.♜xg7† ♙f5 43.♙f3 ♜g8 44.♜e5† 1–0

40. L'Ami – Jugelt, Germany 2011

14.a3! Probably a big surprise for Black. His position simply falls apart. 14...♙xc3 After 14...♜xa3 15.♙a1 ♜xb3 White wins with the accurate 16.♙ab1!. (Instead 16.♙fb1 ♜xc3!± is not so bad for Black; the shot at a1 gives him some counterplay.) 14...♙xa3 15.♙xb5 ♙b4 16.♙a1 is also poor for Black. White is winning after 16...♙xd2 17.♙xa5 ♙xa5 18.dxe5 ♙xe5 19.♙d4 and the rest is a matter of technique – and lots of it. 15.♙xc3 ♜xa3 16.dxe5 ♙e4 17.♙xe4 dxe4 18.b4 Black is close to being lost here. In the game he did not manage to save his skin. 18...♙b6 19.♜g4 ♙a4 20.♙d4 ♜xb4 21.c5 ♙a7 22.♜xe4 ♜c8 23.f4 ♜e7 24.f5 f6 25.e6 ♜b3 26.♙fd1 a5 27.♜g4 ♙h8 28.e4 ♜ee8 29.♙h2 ♜b4 30.♙xf6 gxf6 31.♜d7 1–0

41. Swiercz – M. Yilmaz, Moscow 2012

Black played: 58...♙d5? 59.♙c4 ♜e6?! (Black could still have held the balance with 59...♜a1† 60.♙h2 ♜xe2 61.♜xe2 ♜d4!, where the centralized queen will guarantee Black a draw.) 60.♜xe4 fxe4 61.♜g4± White had the easier endgame, and since Black did not solve his problems, White won on move 93.

58...♜f4! This was the crucial winning move. There are two points, the first being that 59.♜g3 loses to 59...♙h5! and now either 60.♜h2 ♜a1† or 60.♜e1 ♜e4! 61.♙g1 ♙g3. The other is that Black wins easily after 59.♜c6 with either 59...♜e4 60.b6 ♙h5! or with 59...♙e4 60.♜e1 ♙g3† 61.♙g1 ♜e4 62.♜c1 f4.

42. Nakamura – Aronian, Bilbao 2011

Nakamura went on to win a great positional game, despite allowing a strong combination at this early stage: **13...♖xg4!** Instead Aronian played **13...♗d7?±** and lost in 79 moves. **14.♙xg4 ♗d7** The knight on h3 is lost. For example: **15.f3?! 15.♙xe6 ♗xe6 16.♗f3** is maybe more stubborn – but it still stinks. **15...f5! 16.♙xf5 ♙xf5 17.♙f2 ♖xh1† 18.♙xh1** The material is equal here, but White is in disarray and cannot easily get coordinated. Black plays **18...♙g5!** and White is in for a long downhill struggle.

43. Najer – Lysyj, Ulan Ude 2009

White played **14.c4?** and had no advantage after **14...a6**. He won on move 54, but instead of having to work all day, he could have secured an almost winning advantage with: **14.♙b5! ♗b6 15.♗xd8†! ♙xd8** (Black should probably prefer **15...♗xd8**, although **16.♖xd8† ♙xd8 17.♖d1** is still excellent for White.) **16.♙e3 ♗a5 17.b4 ♗xb5 18.♖xd8† ♗e8** (**18...♙e8 19.a4 ♗d7 20.♖xd7 ♙xd7 21.b5!** and Black cannot defend the queenside) **19.♖xe8† ♙xe8 20.♖d1** White has a big advantage. He has more space, two bishops and much greater activity. Not winning this endgame would be disappointing.

44. Traxler analysis – from *The Alterman Gambit Guide – Black Gambits 2*

While typesetting *The Alterman Gambit Guide – Black Gambits 2*, I fell in love with this little piece of analysis. Black wins after clearing the way from b6 to g1 by first giving up the d4-knight. **17...♙e2†!** Deflection and line-clearing. After **17...♗f6? 18.♙e4!** White would win. **18.♙xe2 18.♗xe2 ♗xg3† 19.♗g2 ♗e1†** also leads to mate. **18...♗f6** Preventing mate is difficult. White can try **19.♙f4**, but would have to resign after **19...♗b6†**.

45. Praveen Kumar – Heberla, Mumbai 2011

In the game, the endgame after **28.♗e3? ♖xc2† 29.♙d1 ♗xe3 30.fxex3 ♖xa2** was hopeless and White lost on move 55. **29...♗a5** might have been even stronger, but who cares?

28.♗g5† ♙g7 29.♗h6†!! would have saved the game. Here Black might as well repeat the position, as after **29...♙xh6! 30.hxg6† ♙g7 31.♖xh7†** he will find nothing better than a draw: **31...♙f8 31...♙g8? 32.gxf7† ♙f8 33.♖g8† ♙e7 34.f8=♗# 32.♖h8† ♙e7 33.♖xc8 ♗xf2 33...fxg6 34.♖xg6 ♙xc2 35.♖e6† ♙f7 36.♖xc2± 34.♖h1! ♗f4† 35.♙b2 ♙xc2 36.g7! ♙e1 36...♗d4†** draws as well. **37.g8=♗ ♗d2†** with perpetual check.

46. Zhang Ziyang – Li Shilong, Xinghua Jiangsu 2011

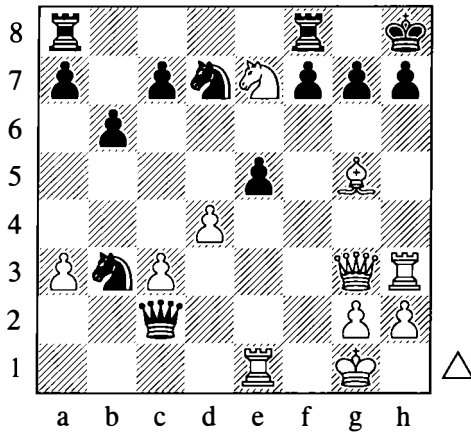
33...♖c2! An elegant move that ends the fight immediately. **33...♖xc1†?! 34.♖xc1 ♙c3** allows Black to stay a piece up, but after **35.bxc3 ♖b8 36.cxb4 ♖xb7 37.♙b2** White has some unnecessary counterplay. **33...♖c4** also works, but is a less attractive cousin. Once you have the idea of approaching the queen without going all the way, the c2-square is the right one. **34.♗xc2 34.♖d1 ♖b8** prepares to take the queen. **34...♙xc2† 35.♙b1 ♖b8 36.♙xc2 ♖xb7 37.♖g5 ♖b5 38.♙b3 h6 39.♖h5 ♙f8 0–1**

47. Kotsur – Volokitin, Moscow 2011

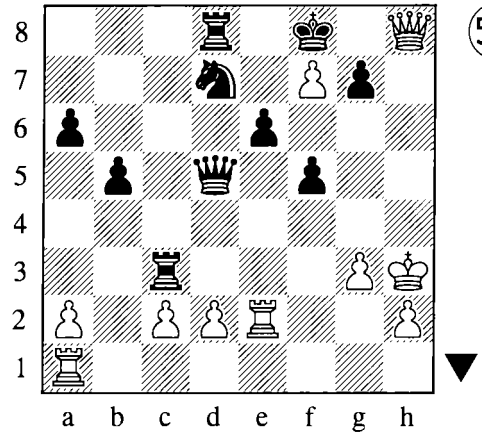
23...♙a4†! **23...♖d2†** only leads to a draw: **24.♙a3 ♗c1† 25.♙b2 ♖xb2 26.♗xb2 ♗e1 27.♗e5** with perpetual check. **24.♙a3 24.bxa4 ♖b6† 25.♙a3 ♙c6!** leads straight to mate. **24...♗c1† 25.♙b2 25.♙xa4 ♙c6† 26.♙a5 ♗a3# 25...♙xb2** White resigned; mate is inescapable. **0–1**

Eljanov – Carlsen, Moscow (blitz) 2010

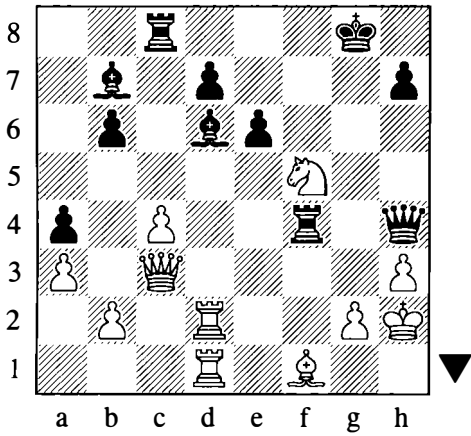
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**Efimenko – S. Zhigalko, Olginka 2011**

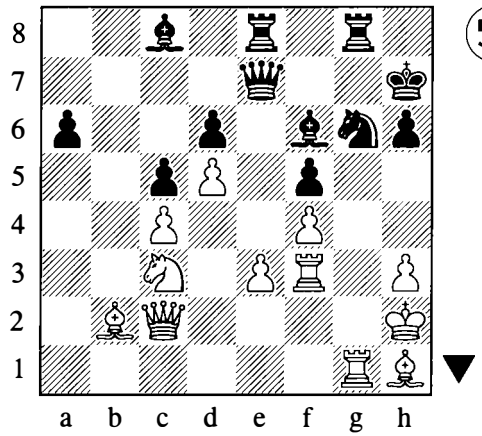
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**Brunello – Rombaldoni, Siena 2010**

49

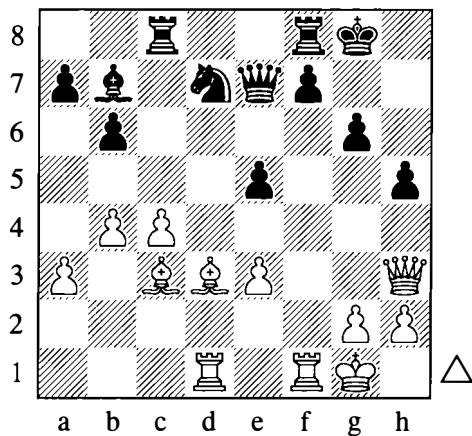
**Sasikiran – Short, Gibraltar 2012**

51



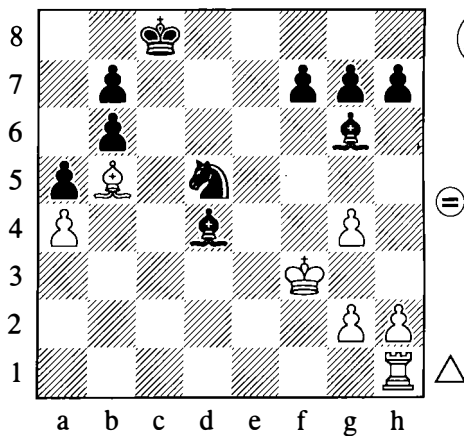
Morozevich – Khismatullin, Taganrog 2011

52



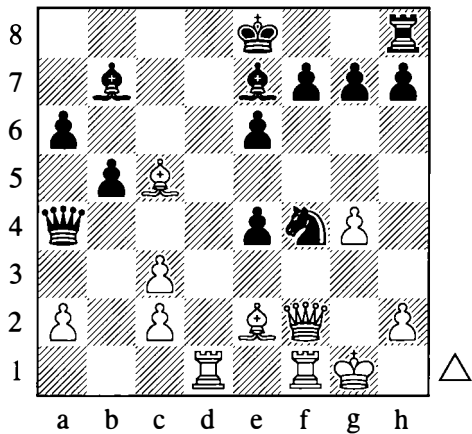
Pavasovic – Bauer, Rogaska Slatina 2011

54



I. Saric – G. Morrison, Porto Carras 2011

53



48. Eljanov – Carlsen, Moscow (blitz) 2010

It is quite forgivable to just take the pawn in a blitz game, but there was something stronger: **22. ♖g4!** The double threat is ♖f5 as well as the simple ♖xd7, both winning immediately. In the game 22.dxe5!? was weaker, although White retains a strong attack. 22...♙ae8? 23.♙h4!± ♖dc5 (23...♖bc5!? was a better try, though 24.♙f1 should still give White a winning attack.) 24.♙f1 ♖e6 Here Carlsen resigned before Eljanov could play 25.♖f5, with mate imminent. **22...f5** What else? **23.♙xh7+ ♖xh7 24.♙h5#**

49. Brunello – Rombaldoni, Siena 2010

It is always tragic to watch Sabino lose, but at times it is useful for training purposes: **30...♙f3+!** 30...♙xf5+ 31.♙xd6 ♙f4+ is nothing special. For example, 32.♙g3+ offers even chances. **31.♙xd6** 31.♖xd6 just lets the queen go, but even better than taking it immediately Black can improve his chances with: 31...♙g3+! 32.♖g1 ♙xc3 33.bxc3 ♙f8 and Black wins, because of 34.♖xb7 ♙e3+ 35.♖h2 ♙xf1 with a material advantage. **31...♙f4+ 32.g3 ♙xf5 33.♙e1** 33.♙d4 can be refuted in several ways, for example 33...♙c2+ 34.♙g2 ♙d3! and Black will eventually win. However, most impressive is 33...♙f2+ 34.♖g1 ♙xf1! 35.♙xf1 ♙xh3 and the white king is slaughtered. **33...♙f2+ 34.♖g1 ♙f3! 35.♙d3 ♙g2+ 36.♖h1 ♙h2+ 37.♖xh2 ♙h1#**

50. Efimenko – S. Zhigalko, Olginka 2011

White had just given the check on h8, but then realized that things had gone seriously wrong and threw in the towel. Black wins after: **35...♖e7!!** 35...♖xf7? 36.♙xd8 ♙xc2 37.♙ae1 ♙xd2 38.♙g5 would have been rather unclear. **36.♙xg7 ♙f8!** Now, no matter what (short of just being a piece down), White cannot prevent ...♙xf7 and ...♖f6, with a winning attack.

51. Sasikiran – Short, Gibraltar 2012

Sasikiran was under the impression that everything was okay, when he was hit by lightning. **29...♖e5!!** The knight had recently been pushed away by the f-pawn, so it is possible to understand why the Indian number two blanked out its ability to return. Black is now totally winning. **30.fxe5** Sasikiran understood that there were no chances after this move and thus chose the bland 30.♙fg3, when after 30...♙xg3 31.♙xg3 ♖xc4+ Black won the game on move 50. **30...♙xe5+ 31.♙f4** 31.♙gg3 ♙xg3 32.♙xg3 ♙xg3+ 33.♖xg3 ♙xe3+ 34.♖h2 ♙f4+ 35.♖g2 ♙g8# **31...♙xg1!** Black has other strong moves, but this tops the list. **32.♖xg1 ♙g5+ 33.♙g2** There are objectively better moves according to the computer, but they are not of great importance to our calculation. This is the move to check and the refutation is what you need to see. **33...♙xf4 34.exf4 ♙g3! 35.♖e2 ♙e1+ 36.♙f1 ♙g8+** Black wins.

52. Morozevich – Khismatullin, Taganrog 2011

Morozevich, who is normally one of the most inventive players in the world had a strong position after his choice of 24.♙g3?! and won on move 35. However, he could have made the opponent's complicity in his defeat an irrelevance, had he found **24.♙f5!!**. The bishop is immune, because ♙xf5 followed by ♙xh5 or ♙g3+ followed by ♙xf5 both win easily. But what else is Black to do?

53. I. Saric – G. Morrison, Porto Carras 2011

Black was under the impression that his opponent was in trouble, but was then hit right between the eyes with a cannonball! **20.♙d8+!!** A lovely move. We all dream of playing such blinders. **20...♙d8?!** Black had a better defence available in 20...♖xd8, though White maintains a strong initiative with 21.♙xe7+ ♖xe7 22.♙xf4. For example: 22...♙c6 23.♙c7+ ♙d7 24.♙xf7+! ♖xf7 25.♙xd7+ ♖f8

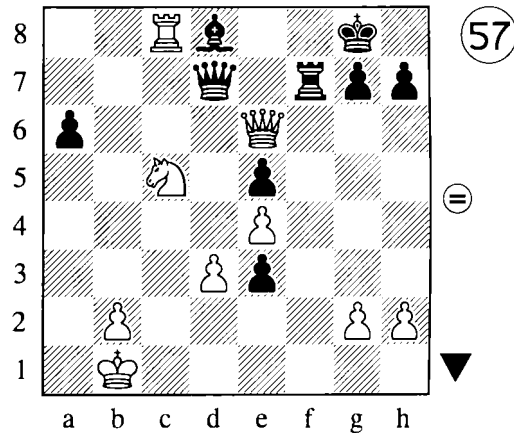
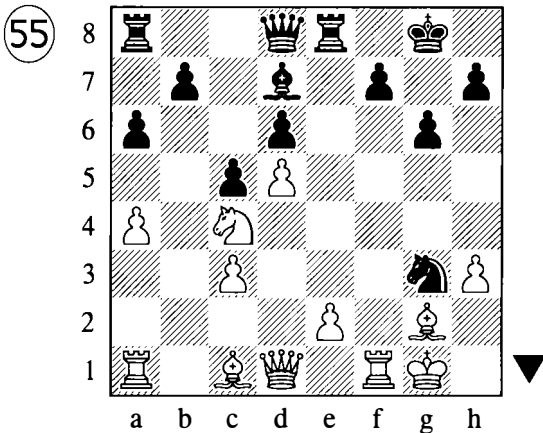
(25...♔f6 26.g5†! either wins the g7-pawn with check or leads to a mating attack.) 26.♖d8† ♔f7 27.♖xh8 ♖xc2 28.♔f2 ♖xc3 29.♖xh7± Black has some drawing chances in the endgame, but they are not huge. **21.♖xf4 f6** But at this point Black was truly lucky. White is completely winning after the correct move, but instead gave away all of his advantage. **22.♖d1??** 22.♖d6! was the winning move: 22...♗d5 (22...♖xa2 23.♖d1 and White wins a piece) 23.♖d1 ♔f7 (23...♖xa2 24.c4! bxc4 25.♖xd5 and wins) 24.♖d7† ♔g6 25.♖xd5! White wins on account of: 25...exd5 26.♖f5† ♔f7 27.♖xd5† ♔g6 28.♖h5# **22...♖a5!** Black is now okay. 23.g5 ♖c7 24.♖xc7 ♗xc7 25.gxf6 ♗d5! The game was drawn in 47 moves.

54. Pavasovic – Bauer, Rogaska Slatina 2011

White is about to lose on points, but found a nice solution: **27.♖d1!** The move you really want to play, but you have to anticipate the answer: **27...♗e4†** 28.♔xe4 ♖c3† 29.♔xd4 ♖xd1 30.h3! The great idea. The knight will not escape and White draws by chasing it endlessly. 30...♔c7 31.♔d3 ♔d6 32.♔d2 ♖f2 33.♔e3 ♖d1† 34.♔d2 ½-½

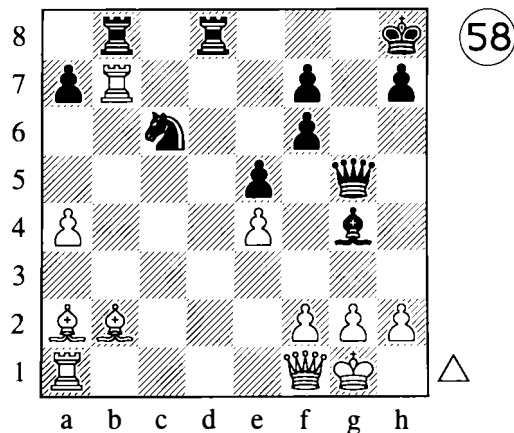
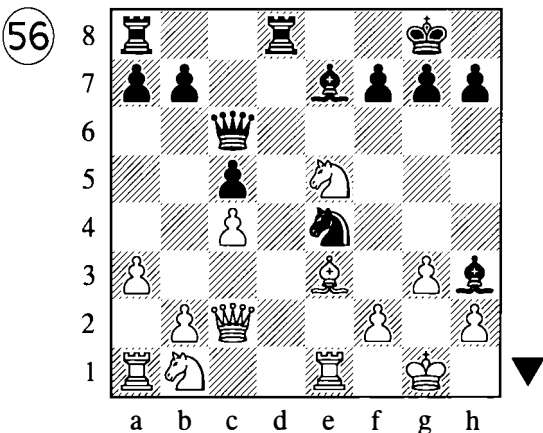
M. Todorov – A. Mastrovasilis, Bansko 2010

Negi – Wen Yang, Mashhad 2011



Rozentalis – B. Socko, Austira 2012

Vitiugov – Chadaev, Taganrog 2011



55. M. Todorov – A. Mastrovasilis, Bansko 2010

18...♙xh3! A fantastic shot, eliminating the white king's protection. **19.♖f2** 19.♙xh3 ♖h4 is difficult for White to defend. 20.♙g2 ♖xe2† is devastating, and 20.♙g2 loses directly to 20...♖xe2† 21.♖f2 ♖xf2† 22.♙xf2 ♖e4† 23.♙e3 ♖e8 with decisive threats. **19...♙xg2?!** 19...♖h4! was even stronger: 20.e3 (20.♖xd6 ♙xg2 21.♙xg2 ♖g4! is an attractive point. The white king is too exposed: 22.♖xe8 ♖xe8 and White has no moves.) 20...♙xg2 21.♙xg2 ♖e4 22.♖f3 ♖g4† 23.♙h2 ♖g5 24.♖d2 ♖e5 and Black wins. **20.♙xg2 ♖e4** Black has a big advantage and won a good game in 48 moves.

56. Rozentalis – B. Socko, Austria 2012

17...♖d2!! 17...♖g5?! offers the same idea, but with the second rank being clear, White can defend with: 18.f4 ♖f3† 19.♖xf3 ♖xf3 20.♖c3 ♙e6= **18.♖xc6** There are no alternatives now. The mate on g2 forces this. **18...♖f3† 19.♙h1 ♙g2†!** The point behind the exercise. **20.♙xg2 ♖xe1† 21.♙h3 ♖xc2 22.♖xe7† 22.♖xd8 ♖xa1 23.♖xb7 ♖b8 24.♖xc5 ♖xb2** is also a comfortable win. **22...♙f8 23.♙xc5?!** 23.♖c6 was slightly more accurate, as Black has to recapture with the rook. But after 23...♖xa1 24.♖xd8 ♖xd8 25.♙xc5† ♙e8 26.♙xa7 ♖b3 he has great winning chances all the same. **23...♖xa1 24.♖c6† ♙e8 25.♖xd8 ♙xd8** Black is clearly winning, but messed it up in time trouble and had to console himself with a draw on move 50.

57. Negi – Wen Yang, Mashhad 2011

Black missed a beautiful drawing possibility: **35...♖xc8!** Instead he played 35...♖xe6? 36.♖xd8† and had to resign. **36.♖xc8 e2** The pawn cannot be stopped. After **37.♖xd8† ♖f8 38.♖d5† ♙h8 39.♖e6 e1=♖† 40.♙a2** the chances are about level.

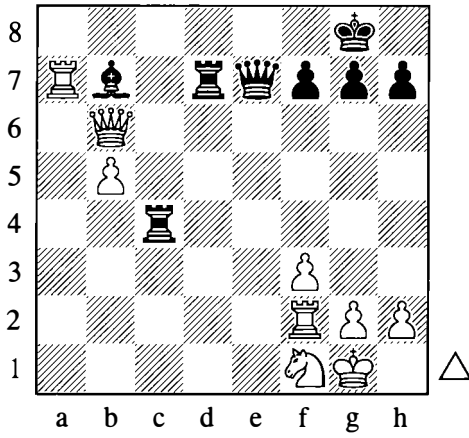
58. Vitiugov – Chadaev, Taganrog 2011

24.f4! exf4? Failing to see the point behind the last move. 24...♖h6! was better, but after 25.♖xb8 ♖xb8 26.♖f2 White would have seriously improved his position and kept the pressure on. For example: 26...exf4 27.♙c1± **25.♖b5!+- ♖xb5 26.♙xf6† ♙g8 27.axb5 ♖b4 27...♖xb7 28.bxc6** and Black loses a piece. **28.♙xf7† ♙f8 29.♖bxa7 ♖d7 30.♙c4 ♖c8 31.♖a8 1-0**

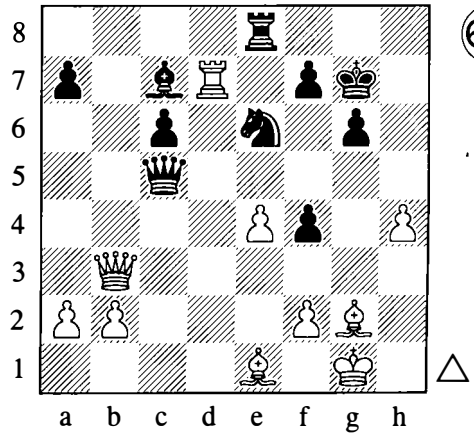
Granda Zuniga – Gonzalez Garcia, Mexico City 2010

Korchnoi – Raznikov, Gibraltar 2012

59



60



59. Granda Zuniga – Gonzalez Garcia, Mexico City 2010

29.♖e2!! This would have won the b7-bishop. White did win the game quickly, but with some help: 29.♗d2?± ♗xd2? (It is hard to say why Black did not play 29...♗cc7.) 30.♗xb7! ♗xg2† (30...♗d7 31.♗b8†) 31.♕xg2 1–0. 29.♞e3? ♗b4 gives Black no problems. **29...♞xe2 30.♞xb7!** The point. **30...♗xb7 30...♞e7 31.♗a8†** and White wins the queen. **31.♗a8†** With checkmate.

60. Korchnoi – Raznikov, Gibraltar 2012

The game finished: **34.♔h3?! ♗b8?** Black missed the opportunity to play 34...♔a5! 35.♔xa5 ♞xa5. White is still better after 36.♞b7±, but Black has a fighting chance. **35.♞xc6 1–0**

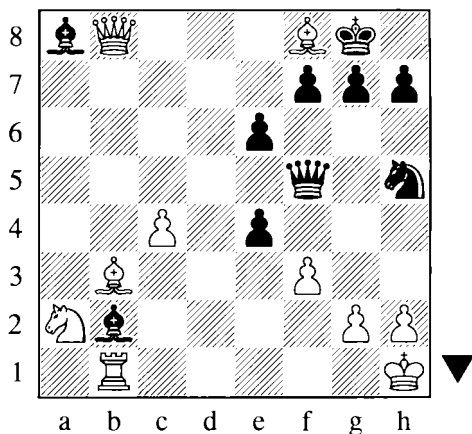
Instead White could have won the game absolutely instantly with **34.♔b4!**, when all tries are refuted quickly: **34...♞b6** (34...♞c1† 35.♗d1+– and the queen is trapped. 34...♞h5 and 34...♞b5 both lose a piece to 35.♔h3!+–.) **35.♞c3†!** Black does not have a good move. For example: **35...♕g8 36.♞f6 ♕d8 37.♔c3+–**

Chapter 2

Combinational Vision

Danny Gormally – Emil Sutovsky

Gibraltar 2005



Black to play

Taken from the annotations to this fascinating game; Black wins with a very nice combination.

Combinational vision, the ability to see tactical themes, is trained in a very straightforward way and has been so for more than a century. The main point is to solve lots of positions, preferably from a book with decently annotated solutions, although this is less important the stronger the student becomes. There are many good books with lots of puzzles, with my own favourite being *Quality Chess Puzzle Book* by John Shaw, for which I was the main researcher.

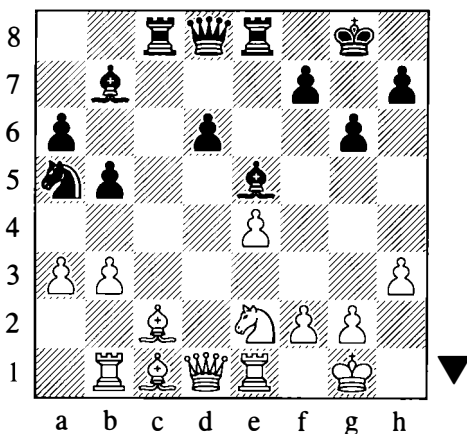
To most chess fans, combinations are dazzling and surprising, and a beautiful combination is the most glorious thing about chess. I am not sure there are many grandmasters who think this way. Although everybody likes combinations, there are parts of chess that are deeper than what we would call typical combinations.

For some club players the smothered mate will surprise and excite. The Greek sacrifice is marvellous and something like Boden's Mate absolutely fantastic. But the combinations that grandmasters find special are often more intuitive and consist mainly of previously unknown themes.

Here is an example of a simple combination:

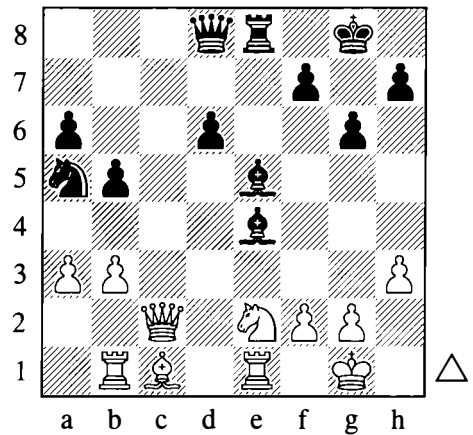
Artur Gabrielian – Viorel Iordachescu

Moscow 2012



Black won with a nice little combination exploiting the discovered attack on e4 from the rook on e8 (via ...♙h2†). The combination is not really difficult and could have been executed by any grandmaster in a simul after a few seconds consideration. Had an amateur lost this game as White, he would maybe have said that he lost to a stunning combination, while I am sure that Gabrielian would rather say that he had blundered horribly.

22...♙xc2! 23.♙xc2 ♙xe4



24.♙xe4?!

White should maybe have played on with a pawn less with 24.♙a2, even though Black can improve his position before regaining the exchange with: 24...♙a8 25.♙f4 ♙xb1 26.♙xb1 ♙xf4 27.♙xf4 ♙e4 and Black wins.

24...♙h2† 25.♙xh2 ♙xe4

Black won on move 46.

This does not mean that grandmasters are any different in their DNA or love of the game than amateurs. Simply they are at different stages of the unending journey towards chess mastery. Where this combination might seem surprising and glorious to the amateur, the

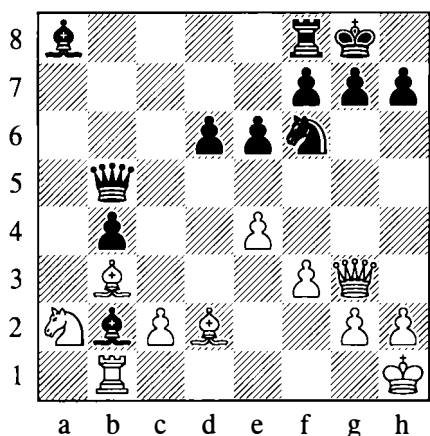
grandmaster has seen ten thousand just like it. And if he is serious about his play, he will see another five hundred to a thousand a year. In the exercise section we shall look at 48 combinations that are not too difficult (at least the first of them). I am sure that many readers will find this section easier than the Candidates section.

The grandmaster can be just as impressed by a combination as the amateur and the requirement is the same. It needs to be surprising.

The following game was mentioned by World Champion Viswanathan Anand in *New in Chess* as the greatest game of chess he had ever seen. I would not go that far, but the creative effort by Emil Sutovsky is certainly impressive. The ideas he found in this game were clearly too difficult for his grandmaster opponent to contain, even if not completely correct. (I am not sure if Danny had the title in 2005, but his peak rating of 2573 in 2006 shows that this distinction is irrelevant.)

Danny Gormally – Emil Sutovsky

Gibraltar 2005



In a complicated Sicilian, White has lost a pawn on b2, but is about to regain it on b4.

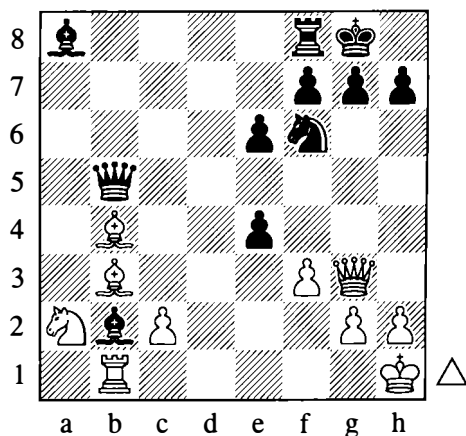
At this moment 29...♙e5+ was the objectively strongest move, but Sutovsky came up with an ingenious idea. And this is my first point: at this moment we are not yet talking about combinations, but about imagination, which we shall of course look more closely at in Chapter 7.

29...d5?!!

To me it is obvious that this whole operation won the game, so I find it nearly impossible to criticize it. But you cannot really get around the fact that it does not work.

30.♙xb4 dxe4?

This is of course what Sutovsky was intending and you have to be a machine to separate this move from the previous. But as most of us look at chess more often with machines than we do with humans, it is worth mentioning that after 30...♗c8 Black would still be okay. For example: 31.e5 ♘d7 32.c3∞



This is the second interesting moment in the game. If I had to put this as an exercise in this book, it would belong in the Difficult Positions chapter, but this would of course be a cop-out. In reality it belongs in the chapter on elimination.

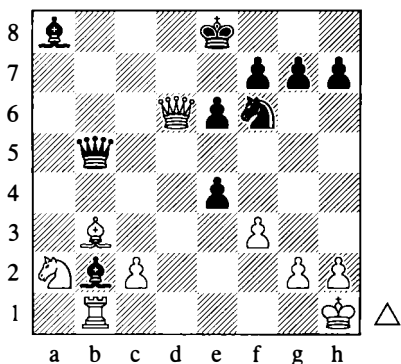
31.c4?

Gormally wants to force the queen away from b5 before taking on f8, presumably with the idea of playing ♖g3-b8 later on. But as we shall see, this holds an obvious flaw.

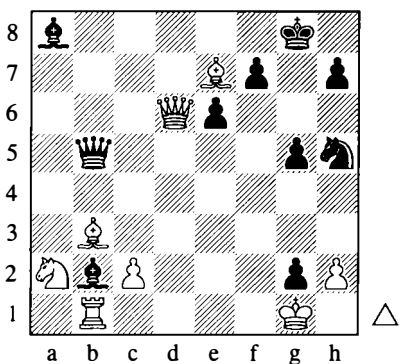
The winning line went as follows:

31. ♔xf8! ♕h5

31... ♕xf8?? was clearly not the plan. And indeed, Black is lost after 32. ♖d6† ♕e8 in more ways than one. But this one is still nice to point out, which is incidentally our first combination in this game.



33. ♕c3!! ♔xc3 34. ♔a4! ♖xa4 35. ♖b8#
32. ♖d6 exf3 33. ♔e7 fxg2† 34. ♕g1 g5



At this point White needs to achieve a few aims. He needs to prevent ... ♔d4†, which could be really devastating in a number of lines. And he also needs to make the most of his bishop on b3, even if this simply means exchanging it for the bishop on a8. This can

be achieved with a nice move, which would have been difficult to find even if Gormally had made it to this point.

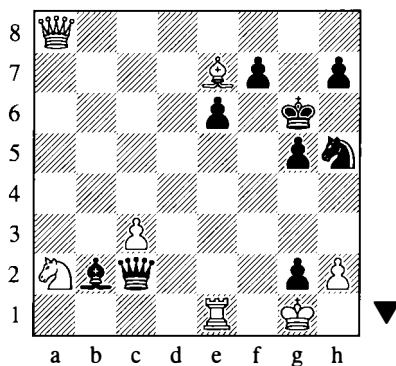
35.c3!!

35. ♖d8† ♕g7 36.c3! gives Black an extra option in 36... ♔e4, but White should still win. However 36. ♖xa8?? ♕f4! gives Black a deadly attack. Despite his extra material White is mated. Even the exchange of queens is not saving him.

35... ♖xb3

35... ♖f5 36. ♖b8† ♕g7 37. ♖f8† ♕g6 38. ♖g8† ♕g7 39. ♖e1 and White is in control – and a rook up.

36. ♖d8† ♕g7 37. ♖f8† ♕g6 38. ♖xa8 ♖c2 39. ♖e1



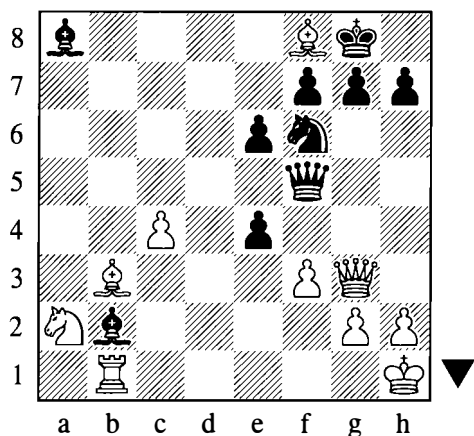
White has an elementary winning position. For example: 39... ♖d2 40. ♖e4† ♕g7 41. ♖e3 or 39... h6 40. ♖g8† ♕g7 41. ♔f8. In both cases White wins.

31... ♖f5! 32. ♔xf8?

The trend is not with White. It is quite plausible that he missed both of Black's combinations from this point.

After 32. ♖xb2 exf3 33. ♕g1 ♕h5! (33... fxg2 34. ♖f2! with unclear play is also possible. One point is 34... ♖h5 35. ♖c5!.) 34. ♖d6 ♖c8 Black is still fighting for an advantage. It is not clear that he is better at this point, but his position is more pleasant to play for sure.

The best move was 32.f4! to stop the pawn before it made it any further. After 32...♙d4 33.♙xf8 ♖xf8 34.♙c2 the game would be pretty open.

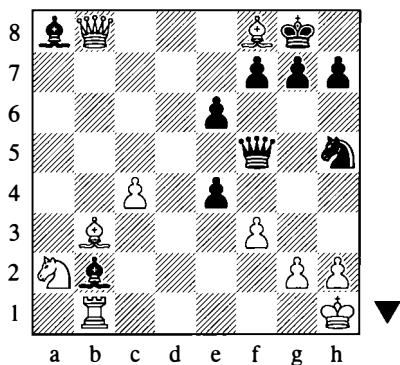


32...♙h5!

Black is now winning, due to two brilliant combinations.

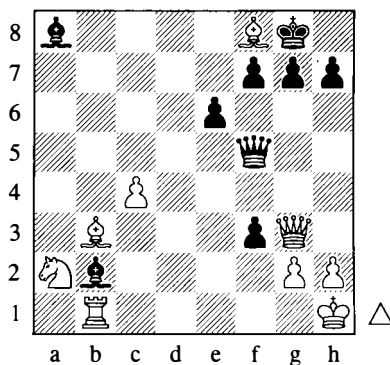
33.♖g4

The first combination arises after 33.♖b8, which I suspect was part of Gormally's original intention. Only here is the first brilliant point behind Black's last move revealed.

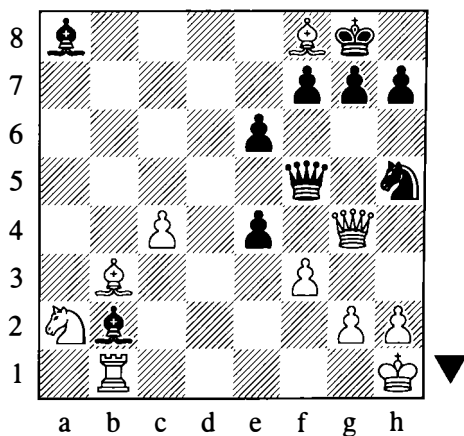


33...♙g3! A fantastic sacrifice. The first point is pretty obvious. After 34.hxg3 ♖h5† 35.♙g1 ♙d4† it is not hard to see that the tandem provided by the black queen and bishop will decide the game in their favour.

But the second point can be a bit hard to see at first. After 34.♖xg3 the position has been repeated, except that Black has managed to get rid of his knight from f6! This means that after 34...exf3:

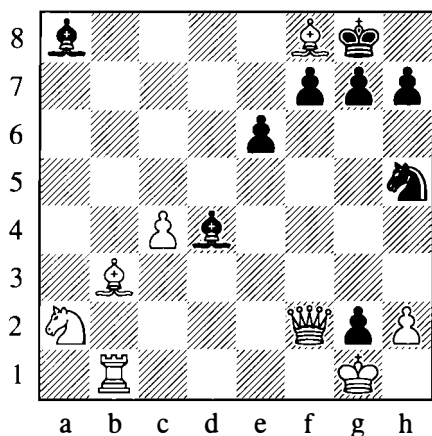


The g7-pawn is now defended by the b2-bishop and Black can carry on with his aggressive intent, based on the double threat on the long diagonal and along the first rank, starting with queen takes rook. White is mated after 35.♙xb2 fxg2† 36.♙xg2 ♖f1# or 35.♙d1 fxg2† 36.♙g1 ♙d4† 37.♙xd4 ♖f1#.



The position in the game does superficially look good for White. He is a rook up and Black has several pieces hanging. A typical scenario for a combination. Black loses in all lines but one!

33...exf3! 34.♖xf5 fxg2† 35.♔g1 ♔d4! 36.♖f2



36...♔f4!!

The crowning moment of the game. White cannot prevent a deadly check on h3 or e2; Black's g2-pawn is stronger than the entire white army. When talking about combinations I often refer to *the point* of a combination. This is what I mean, the moment when the beautiful idea is revealed and the position goes from its superficial 1–0 evaluation to 0–1.

37.h4

Other moves allow mate immediately.

37...♔e2† 38.♔h2 ♔xf2

White will soon be two pawns down in an ending, with his king still not safe.

0–1

Absolutely a fantastic game, but somehow I suspect that it was not the nice finish that attracted Anand as much as the creative build-up. For sure there are nicer finishes in the history of chess – and in my opinion also no shortage of better games, but this is just one opinion of course.

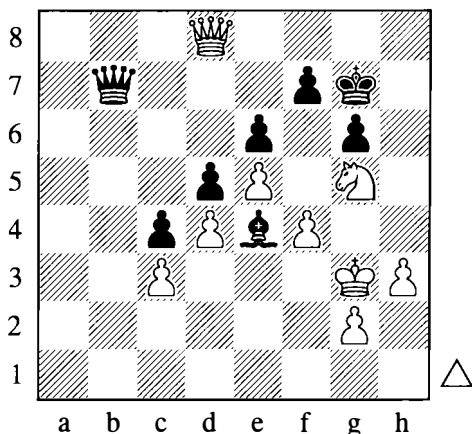
My main point, besides showing some great chess, is that to the grandmaster the

combination is a tool that is acquired and used in the same way as endgame technique. We need to train it to keep it fresh, but we should not overrate it either. There are players near the absolute top of the rating list who miss just about every possible combination that occurs in their games, even though they are (rightly) considered great attacking players. Clearly they are not doing the necessary work on this aspect of chess at the moment, but focusing all their energy on opening preparation. Chess mastery should be achieved through a balanced approach, where we are prepared for all parts of the game. Of these, combinational vision is one of the important ones.

One of the things illustrated by working through countless puzzles (and endgame studies, another great training tool) is the dynamic potential of the pieces. While most ambitious players have a decent feeling for the twists and turns of the Greek sacrifice or a sacrifice on f7, few have a good feeling for the attacking potential of pawns and the king. At times they can be combined, as in this example:

Sam Collins – Danny Gormally

Dublin 2012



White has a pawn more and is generally winning, but achieving this by exchanging queens is easier said than done. Instead it is the weakness of the black king that can be exploited.

White wins after:

50.♖h4!

The king is approaching with the intention of supporting the queen in delivering mate.

50...♙d3

Black is paralysed. He cannot improve his position.

51.g4

Further preparation of the attack. Here we are dealing with an endgame theme: you should take your time to get everything right in positions where the opponent has no counterplay.

51...♙c2

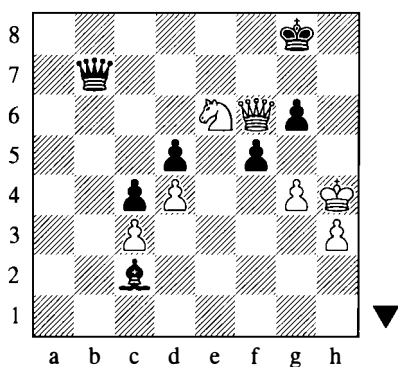
White is now ready and will break through with a pawn sacrifice.

52.f5!

Black cannot allow the pawn to reach f6 for obvious reasons.

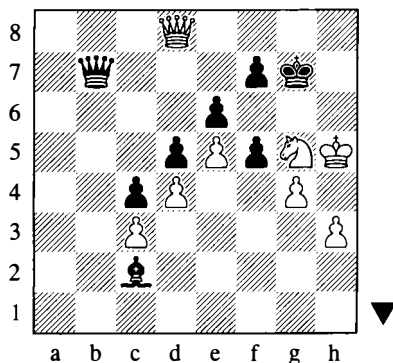
52...gxf5

White wins instantly after 52...exf5 53.♞f6† ♔g8 54.e6 fxe6 55.♙xe6.



Black has no counterplay and after something like 55...♞h7† 56.♙g3 he will have to play 56...♞f7, when 57.♞d8† wins the queen.

53.♙h5!

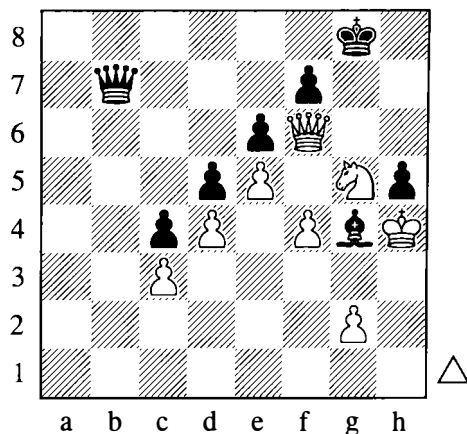


White wins. There is no defence against 54.♞f6† and 55.♙h6 with mate on g7 to follow.

50.h4?!

This is still dangerous for Black, but it would obviously have been better to include as many pieces as possible in the attack. Having said that, White is still winning. So although this was a near miss for Gormally, he was not out of the woods yet.

50...♙f5 51.♞f6† ♔g8 52.♞d8† ♔g7 53.♞f6† ♔g8 54.h5 gxh5 55.♙h4 ♙g4



This is the second winning moment of the game. White has returned his pawn and lost some of his influence on the light squares. But his advantage is still enough for the same breakthrough to work.

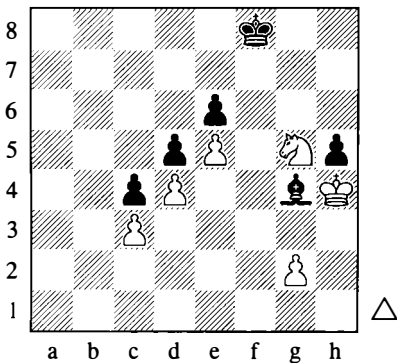
56.f5!!

As said, this would still be winning. The first point is that Black cannot take the pawn with his bishop as the king would again arrive at h6 to support the mate.

The second is that after 56...exf5 White has a new idea available in 57.♖h6!, when the knight manoeuvre g5-h7-f6 is absolutely deadly. White also wins with 57.e6, but mate is rather decisive.

So the only option that remains is to accept the exchange of pawns and defend it.

56...♙d7 57.fxe6 fxe6 58.♙g6† ♚g7 59.♙e8† ♙f8 60.♙xf8† ♙xf8



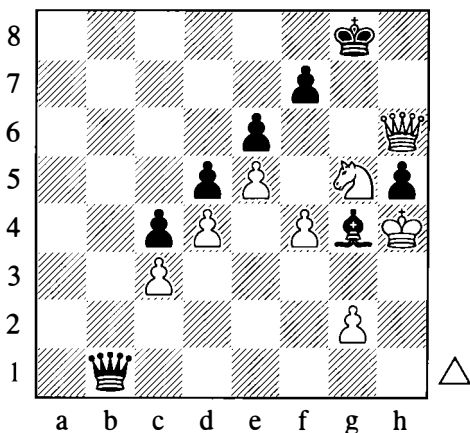
61.♖h7† ♙e7 62.♖f6

White wins.

56.♙h6?

As we know, the idea is quite nice. But executed in this way it has a serious flaw.

56...♙b1!



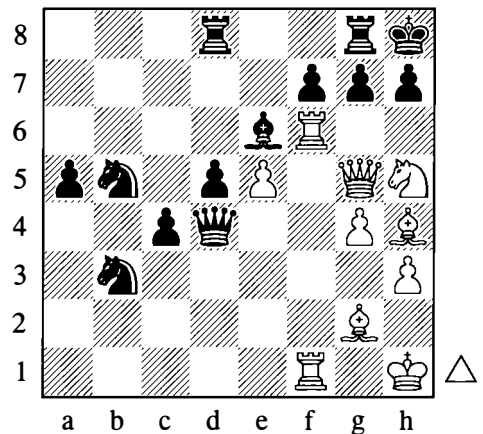
Black is now both defending h7 and preparing counterplay against the white king. The game ended in a draw after a few more moves.

57.♖f3 ♙h1† 58.♙g3 ♖xf3 59.♙g5† ♙f8 60.♙d8† ♙g7 61.♙g5† ♙f8 62.♙d8† ♙g7 ½-½

Before I turn you over to the 48 puzzles in this section, I want to show one last example, with the only point being that I think it is quite nice (I should probably also mention that the combination is to some extent based on an attack on the dark squares, where White is dominant because of the knight for bishop exchange earlier in the game. A theme you will find covered in *Attacking Manual 1*).

Ferenc Berkes – Ante Saric

Bosnia 2011



White realized that the weakest point in the black position was the h7-square and acted accordingly.

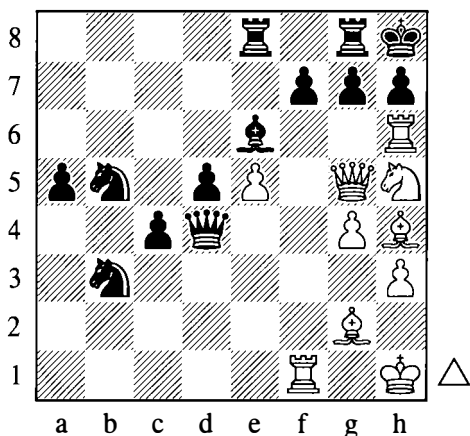
35.♙h6!!

A nice idea, which is replicated in the line 35.♖f4 ♖de8 36.♙h6!, which would also have won.

35...♖de8

Not the toughest defence, but Black was probably in time trouble and worried about his rook hanging in lines involving ♖h5-f6. Of course this works anyway, but sometimes this is the way things go in chess.

The downside to this last move is that the king cannot run to e8 when needed, and this is exploited by the combination Berkes now executes.

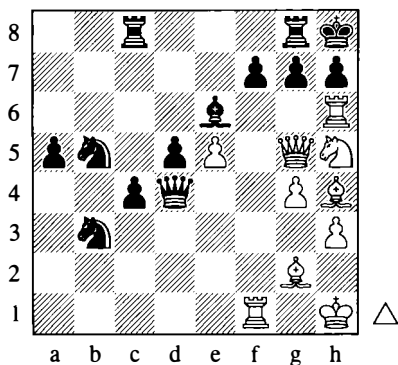


36.♖xh7! ♜xh7 37.♖f6! gxf6 38.♖h5! ♜g7 39.♜xf6†

Black is mated.

1-0

The idea of moving the rook away was not stupid, but it is also not sufficient to save Black. Take for example 35...♖c8, which does not block the e8-square.



Here White has two winning lines, of which the more attractive is 36.♖xf7! ♜xf7 37.♖f5! and Black is clearly lost. He can only delay the mate. He cannot prevent it.

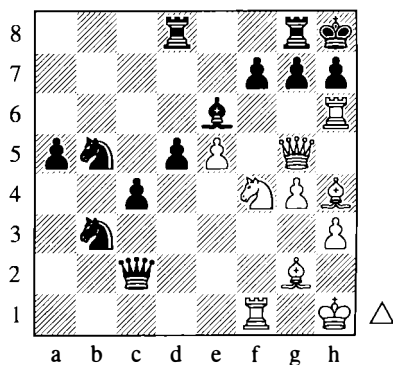
The alternative win is with 36.♖f4. The threats are ♖xh7† with mate or if the rook moves away from g8 then simply 37.♖h5 and Black is murdered on the dark squares.

The true defensive try (at least according to the ideas expressed in the previously mentioned *Attacking Manual 1*) would be to defend the weakest spot in the black position. This leads to the most amazing winning line:

35...♖d3

35...♖d2 and 35...♖c3 both transpose after 36.♖f4!, when Black has to put the queen on c2 anyway.

36.♖f4 ♖c2



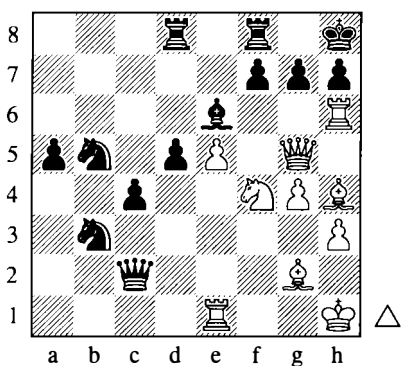
If we look at this not through the lens of calculation, but think more strategically and look at our advantage as being dynamic, we should always work out ways to include the remaining pieces in the attack (Chapter 1 of *Attacking Manual 1*) for reasons that are self-evident to most; an attack will have the greatest chance of success if we include as much firepower as possible. In this position this is the bishop on g2 and the rook on f1. As the target squares are f6, g7 and especially h7, it is not hard to see how they can get into the game:

37.♖e1!!

The idea is obvious, but at the same time impossible to prevent.

37...♗g8

Freeing up the g8-square for the king to soften the blow of ♕e4 and ♖xh7.



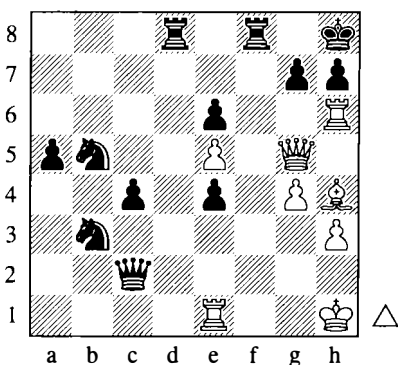
38.♕e4!

I think this is the move most people would play even though White has some additional wins with 38.♖xe6!, taking advantage of the weakening of the defence of the g7-square, and 38.♗h5!, which also relies on ♕e4-ideas.

38...dxe4

38...♗xe4† 39.♖xe4 dxe4 is obviously worse than the main line. White wins with 40.♗h5! and Black is just mated.

39.♗xe6 fxe6

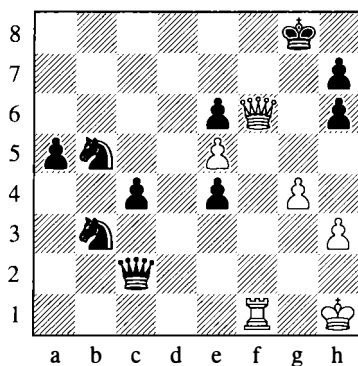


Black is preparing to defend his kingside with ...e4-e3 when the queen is back in business after the short delay. Direct sacrifices on h7 do not work because the king now has an escape square. But luckily we have taken a short training course in the technique of looking for candidate moves!

40.♗g6!!

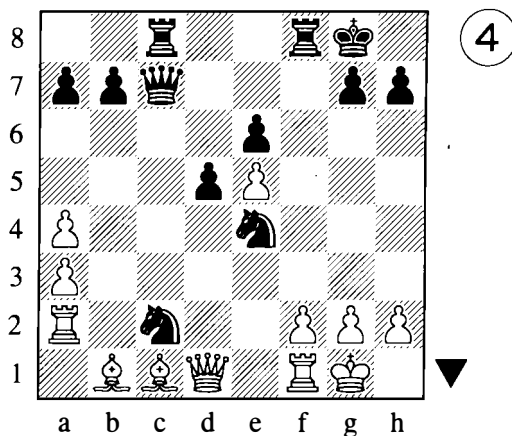
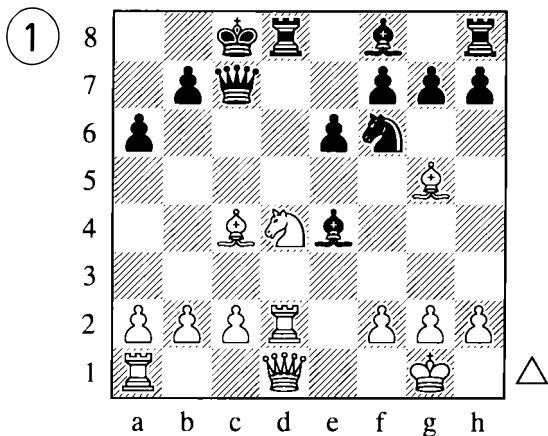
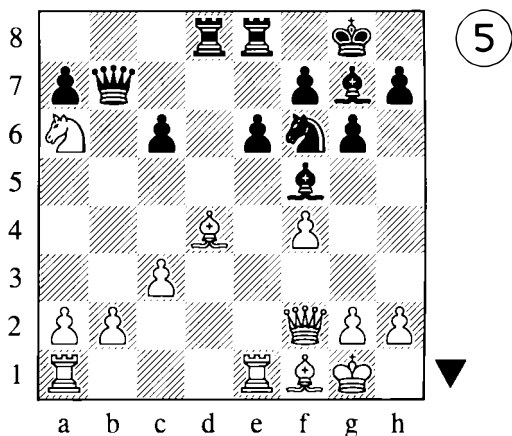
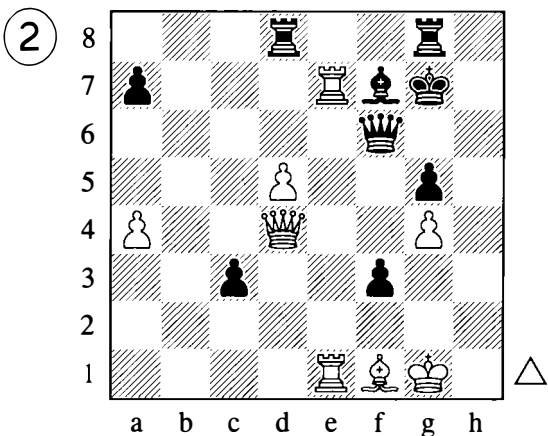
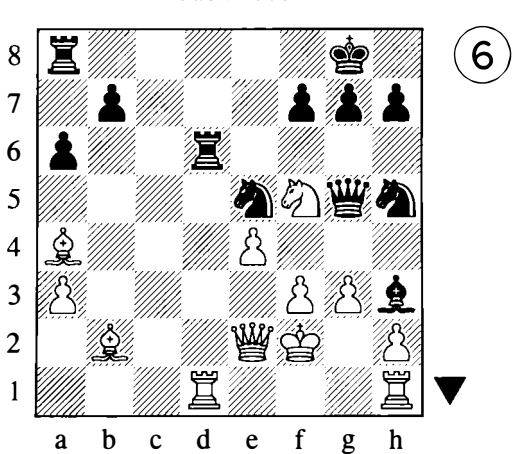
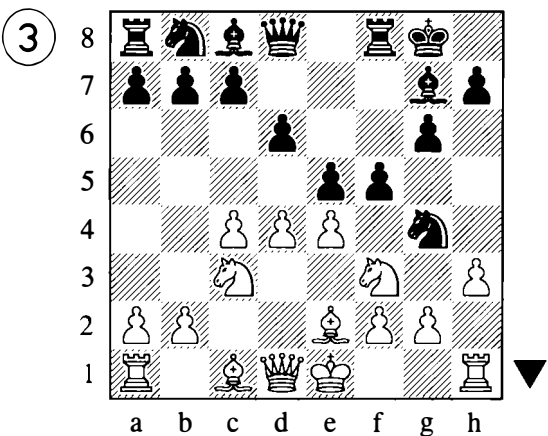
For humans this can be missed, but once you see it there is no great mystery about the strength of it. Black's reply is forced, but rather feeble.

40...gxh6 41.♕f6† ♖xf6 42.♗xf6† ♜g8 43.♗xd8† ♜g7 44.♗f6† ♜g8 45.♖f1



Black is mated.

Combinational vision can be trained through extended solving of puzzles. There are many good books on the market and even the poor ones will offer all readers some resistance. For the ambitious player this area simply needs to be covered and mastered to some degree. Obviously there are moves and ideas that are completely non-standard, but we shall be dealing with them in Chapter 7.

Hou Yifan – Xu Yuhua, Ulaanbaatar 2010**Howell – Feller**, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010**Ding Liren – Wang Hao**, Chengdu 2011**Berbatov – Edouard**, Aix-les-Bains 2011**Eletskikh – Pancevski**, Herceg Novi 2005**Vera Gonzalez-Quevedo – Corrales Jimenez**
Cuba 2008

1. Hou Yifan – Xu Yuhua, Ulaanbaatar 2010

16. ♖xe6! ♜xd2 17. ♜xd2 ♜d6 Pure resignation. White is now winning any which way, for example by exchanging queens and grabbing the g7-pawn. She played differently but won on move 29 anyway. **17... ♜xe6** would be the more principled test. White wins after **18. ♖xe6† ♖d7** (18... ♖b8? 19. ♖f4 just wins the queen, of course) and now just slow play; the pin is decisive. There are many ways to decide the game in White's favour, but let's just take a straightforward one: 19. ♖d1 ♖c6 20. ♖f4 ♜d8 21. ♜c3 and d7 falls.

2. Ding Liren – Wang Hao, Chengdu 2011

31. ♜xf7†! ♜xf7 32. ♜xa7† ♜f8 33. ♜e6! Black resigned. For example: 33... ♜f7 34. ♜c5† ♜g7 35. ♜e7 1–0

3. Eletsikh – Pancevski, Herceg Novi 2005

10... ♖xf2!! 11. ♜xf2 ♜xe4 12. ♖xe4 ♜h4† 13. ♜e3?! This is actually the second time this combination has been played. The first game was a blitz game, but there White defended better: 13. ♜g1! ♜xe4 14. d5 ♖f5 Ivanchuk – Bologan, Edmonton 2005. Black is of course winning here, but eventually White managed to draw. 13... ♖h6† 14. ♜d3 ♜xe4†!! The big point. 15. ♜c3 Resigned to his fate. 15. ♜xe4 leads to a forced mate. 15... ♖f5† 16. ♜d5 c6† 17. ♜xd6 ♖d8† 18. ♜xe5 (18. ♜c5 ♖f8#) 18... ♖d7† 19. ♜d6 ♖f8† 20. ♜c7 ♖ab8 and .. ♖dc8#. **15... ♖xd4† 16. ♖xd4 ♖g7 17. ♖f3 ♜h4 18. ♖f1 ♜h8 19. g3 ♜xg3 20. ♜c2 ♖xh3 21. ♖g1 ♜f2† 0–1**

4. Howell – Feller, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010

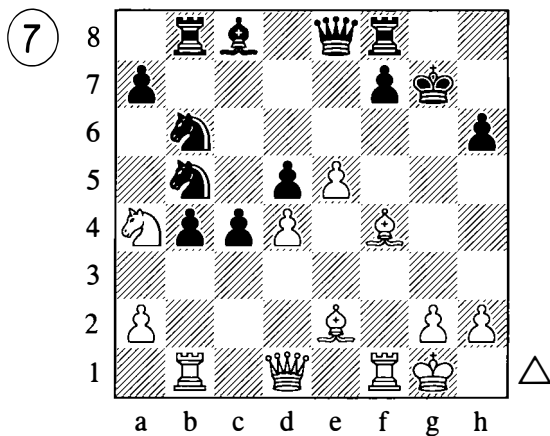
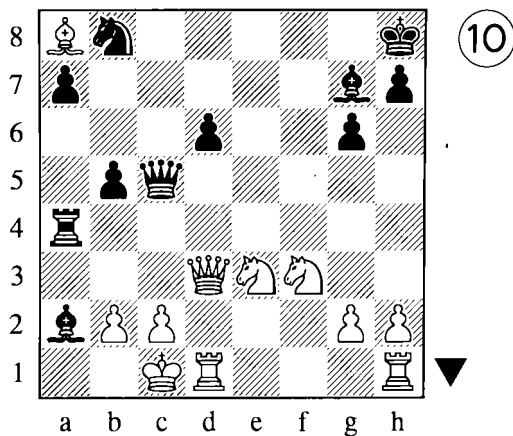
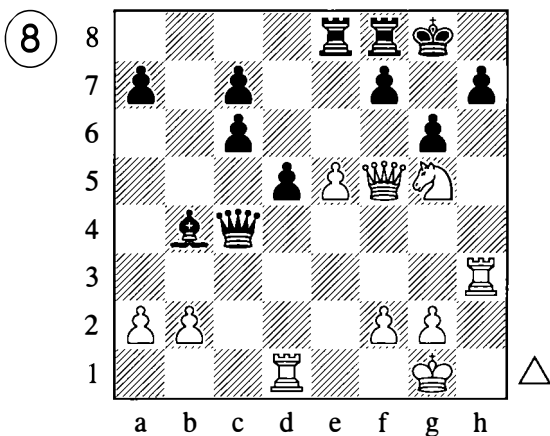
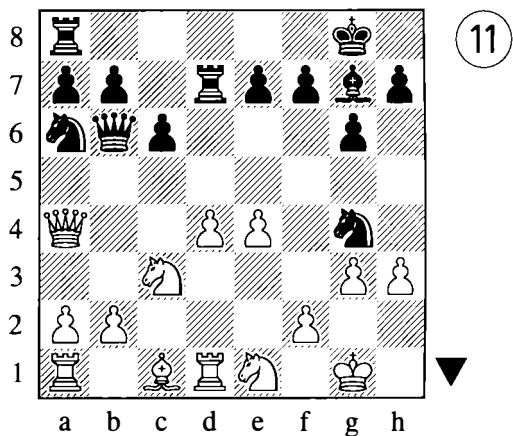
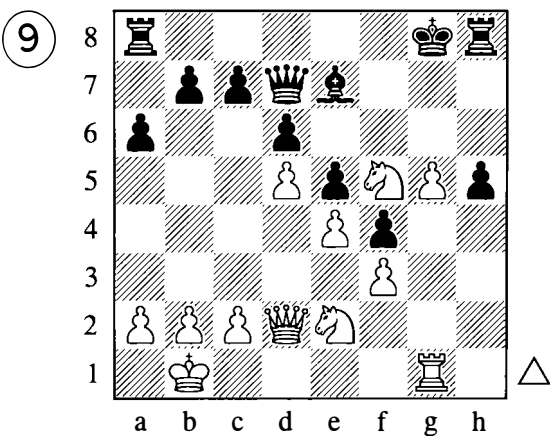
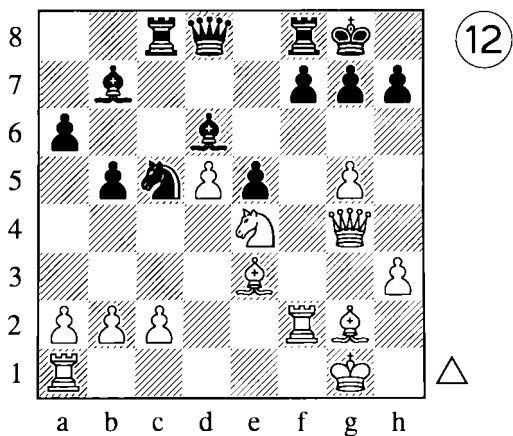
22... ♖xf2! 22... ♜b6? 23. ♜xc2 would allow White to fight on. **23. ♜xc2** A sad necessity. 23. ♜xf2 ♜xf2 24. ♜xf2 ♜b6† gives a winning attack. 25. ♜f3 (25. ♜g3 ♜c3† 26. ♜h4 ♜f2† with a mating attack) 25... ♖d4† 26. ♜g3 ♜xb1 The attack does not slow down from here. **23... ♖h3†! 24. g3 ♜b6† 25. ♜g2 ♜xc2† 26. ♖xc2 ♜xf1 27. ♜xf1 ♜c7** White has a rook and two bishops for the queen. But with a weak king and his centre disintegrating, there is no hope. Black won on move 48... **0–1**

5. Berbatov – Edouard, Aix-les-Bains 2011

A standard breakthrough on the dark squares. **23... ♖g4 24. ♜d2 ♖xd4!! 24... e5!?** is also attractive, but I do not believe many would look in that direction. **25. cxd4 ♜b6** A very natural and totally sufficient move. But slightly more accurate was making use of the worst-placed piece: 25... ♖d8! 26. h3 ♖xd4† 27. ♜h1 ♖f2† (27... ♜e7! is a computer move) 28. ♜h2 ♜xb2 Black ends up with a few extra pawns in the endgame. **26. g3?! Not a great move, but 26. ♖d1 ♖d8 27. ♜b4** would also not have saved the game: 27... ♖xd4† 28. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 29. ♜xb6 axb6 with a winning ending. **26... ♖xd4† 27. ♜h1 ♖f2† 28. ♜g2 c5 29. ♖c4 ♜b7† 0–1**

6. Vera Gonzalez-Quevedo – Corrales Jimenez, Cuba (ch) 2008

Black needs to bring in the knight immediately to have a shot. **21... ♖f4! 22. gxf4?** White should have fought on with 22. ♖xd6! when the position after 22... ♖xe2 23. ♖xe5 ♖xf5 24. exf5 ♜xf5 25. ♖hd1 ♖f8 26. ♖d5 ♜c8! 27. ♖d2 ♜c4 28. ♖c2 ♖c3 should win for Black, but still holds technical difficulties. **22... ♜g2† 23. ♜e3 ♖d3†! White resigned. 0–1**

Onischuk – Gaponenko, Gibraltar 2011**Lim – Rafalski, London 2010****Vallejo Pons – Onischuk, Reggio Emilia 2011****Gajewski – Jankovic, Cappelle la Grande 2011****Short – Azmaiparashvili, Cap d'Agde (rapid) 1996****Nepomniachtchi – Frolyanov, Olginka 2011**

7. Onischuk – Gaponenko, Gibraltar 2011

25.♙xh6! This is not a move we should miss even if **25.♞d2! ♘xa4 26.♙xh6 ♜h7 (26...♜h8 27.♙g7!)** **27.♙d1! ♘ac3 28.♙c2 ♘e4 29.♙xf8 ♞xf8 30.♞xb4** also wins for White eventually, as Black is hanging in too many places. The direct way should be seen. **25...♜xh6 25...♜h8 26.♙xc4 or 26.♙xf8.** Many ways, one result. **26.♞d2 ♜h7 27.♞f6!** Black is mated. **27...♙f5 28.♞h6 ♜g8 29.♙xf5 f6 30.exf6 1–0**

8. Vallejo Pons – Onischuk, Reggio Emilia 2011

26.♞f6! ♙e7 What else? **27.♜xh7!! ♞g4 27...♙xf6 28.♜xf6 ♜g7 29.♞h7# 28.♞xe7! 1–0**

9. Short – Azmaiparashvili, Cap d'Agde (rapid) 1996

28.♜xf4! In his prime Nigel Short was simply outstanding. Many like to think that it was a fluke that he made it to a World Championship match in 1993, but this is not the tale told by his games at the time. Sure, he has not really worked on his game for the last ten or so years (and yet he can still win Gibraltar and other big events), but when he was at his peak he was a formidable player. Not **28.g6! ♙f6±. 28...exf4** The only critical test. In the game Black did not want to go down quickly, but this did not help him: **28...♙f8 29.♜e6 h4 30.♜h6 ♞xh6 31.gxh6 ♜h8 32.♞g5 (32.♞g7!) 32...♞f7 33.♞xh4 ♙e7 34.♞h3 ♞f6 35.♞g7 ♞g8 36.♜xc7 ♙f8 37.♜e6 ♙e7 38.a3 b5 39.♞g4 1–0. 29.♞d4** The queen can go to c3 as well, there is no difference. **29...♙f8 30.♜h6 ♞f6** works by changing the move order around slightly. **30...♜h7 30...♞xh6 31.gxh6 ♜h7 32.♞f6!** and Black is mated. **31.g6 ♞f6** Black is mated.

10. Lim – Rafalski, London 2010

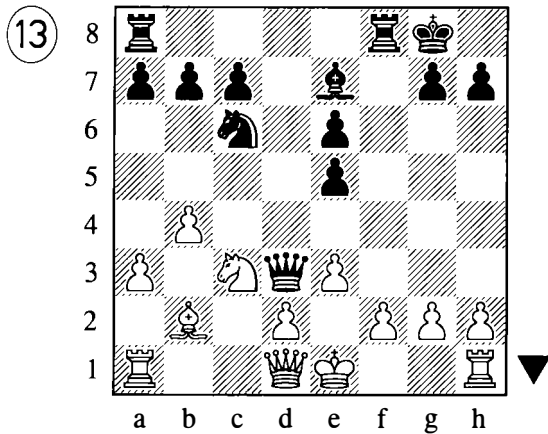
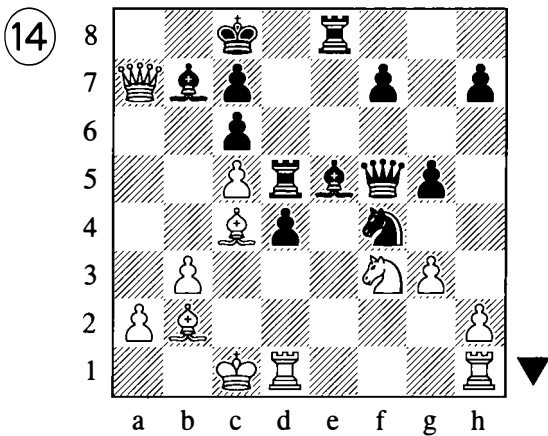
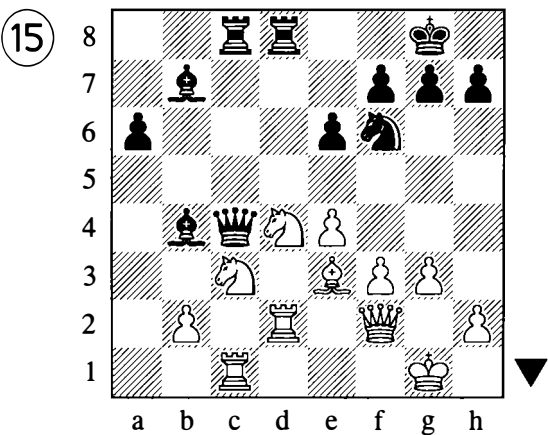
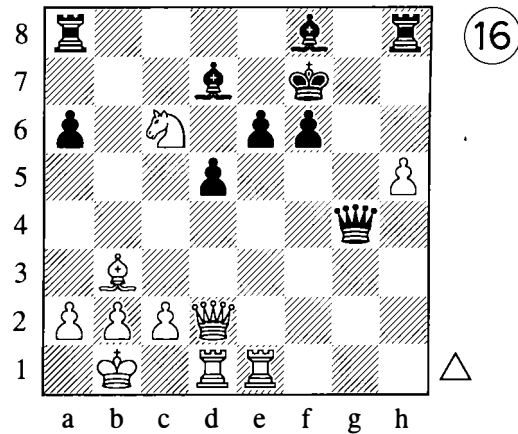
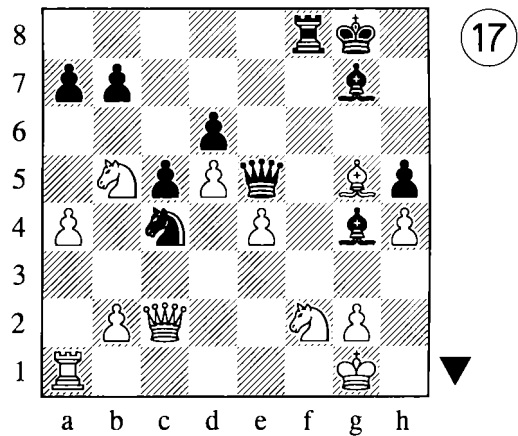
Black has given up a rook and has to act with haste. He uses the chance to attack the queen to win an important tempo: **20...♙xc4! 21.♜xc4 21.♞e4 ♙xb2 ♜d2 ♞b4** with mate on the next move. **21...bxc4 22.♞e2** White has no way to save the game: **22.♞e4 ♙a1 ♜d2 ♞f2 ♜d2 ♙e2 ♙h6** and the queen is lost. **22...♙xb2! 23.♜d2 ♙c3!!** The beautiful point to the whole combination. **24.♜xc3 ♙a3 ♜d2 ♞b4** White is mated on the next move. **0–1**

11. Gajewski – Jankovic, Cappelle la Grande 2011

16...♞xd4! Good old-fashioned destruction of the kingside. In the game Black came up with a faulty combination: **16...♜xf2? 17.♜xf2 ♞xd4? (17...e5± was better, but still insufficient) 18.♞xd4 e5 19.♞b3! exd4 20.♞xb6 axb6 21.♜a4±** White won with his extra piece on move 53. **17.♞xd4 ♙xd4 18.hxg4 ♙xf2 ♜f1 ♙xe1 19...♙xg3 20.♜d1 ♙xe1** also wins. **20.♜xe1 ♞g1 ♜e2 ♞d8** Black has a winning attack. White cannot move and eventually Black will take g3 with check and bring the rook in for the kill on the d3-square.

12. Nepomniachtchi – Frolyanov, Olginka 2011

21.♜f6 ♜h8 22.♞h5! gxf6 This is forced. After **22...h6 23.♜g4** Black can just resign. **23.♞xf6 ♞g8 23...♜g8** loses to several moves. The most prosaic is **24.♞h6 e4 25.♞xh7 ♙e5 26.g6 ♞f6 27.g7** winning the queen for very little compensation. **24.♞xf7 ♞g7 25.♞xg7 ♜xg7 26.g6!** The beautiful point Nepomniachtchi had prepared. However it should be said that **26.b4** also wins. **26...♜a4 27.♙e4** could be the point; White has winning threats. **26...hxg6 27.♞h6 ♜g8 28.♞xg6 ♜h8 29.♞f1** Bringing in the rook for the kill. **29...♙f8 30.♞f7 ♞h4 31.♙g5 1–0**

Conquest – Hawkins, Hinckley Island 2011**Maciej – Grandelius, Stockholm 2011****M. Meyer – Guliyev, Baden-Baden 2011****Vorobiov – Bagaturov, Jermuk 2010****Michalik – Rapport, Merlimont 2011**

13. Conquest – Hawkins, Hinckley Island 2011

Things have obviously gone wrong for White in the opening, but just how much was probably not clear to Conquest before his opponent played: **14...♟d4!!** A classical sacrifice. The real idea is just to win control over the d4-square. In one terminology this is called a reloader. **15.♞c1** Trying to resist, but probably not with any real hope of success. Hawkins' point is revealed after 15.exd4 when he would have played: 15...♞xf2!! (15...exd4? 16.♞b1!+— is of course not what Black intended) 16.♟xf2 ♞f8† 17.♟e1 (17.♟g1 ♞xd4# is mate directly, and 17.♞f3 ♟h4† is mate in a few) 17...♟h4† 18.g3 ♟xg3† 19.hxg3 ♞xg3† 20.♟e2 ♞f3† 21.♟e1 ♞f2# **15...♟h4! 16.♞f1 ♞f5! 17.g3** 17.exd4 ♟xf2† 18.♟e2 e4! 19.d3 e3 also leaves White defenceless. **17...♟f3† 18.♟e2 ♞ad8 19.d3** 19.♞c2 ♞d3# is pretty, but not serious. **19...♟g1†!** The final finesse; d3 falls, and badly. **0–1**

14. Macieja – Grandelius, Stockholm 2011

Black won with a very nice reloader/clearance combination. **22...♟e2†!! 23.♟xe2** 23.♟d2 ♞xf3 makes no sense. **23...♟f4† 24.gxf4** 24.♞d2 could transpose, but 24...♟xd2† 25.♟xd2 ♞xe2† 26.♟xe2 ♞c2† 27.♟f1 ♞f5 leads to an even faster mate. **24...♞xe2 25.♞d2 ♞xc5† 26.♟d1 ♞xd2† 27.♟xd2 ♞g4† 28.♟e1 d3 29.♟f2 ♞xf4† 0–1**

15. M. Meyer – Guliyev, Baden-Baden 2011

Black wins because of a few X-Ray ideas: **24...♟xe4! 25.♟ce2** 25.fxe4 ♟xe4 wins as well. After 26.♞e1 ♟xd2 27.♞xd2 e5 Black wins on points. **25...♞xc1†! 26.♟xc1 ♞xc1† 27.♟g2 ♟g4! 28.♞c2** One of Black's many points was that he wins after 28.♞e2 ♟xe3† 29.♞xe3 ♟xd2 30.♞xd2 ♞c2!, again because of an X-Ray attack. **28...♞xc2 0–1**

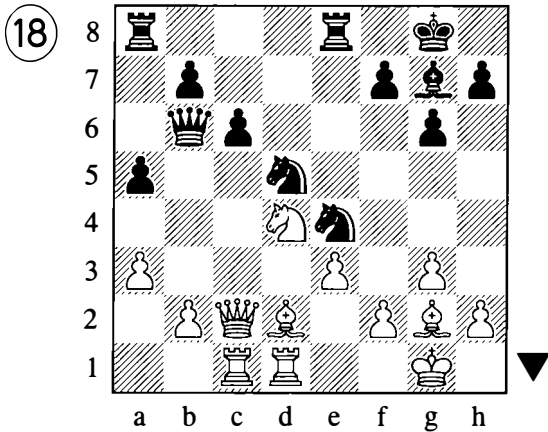
16. Vorobiov – Bagaturov, Jermuk 2010

All of White's pieces are ideally placed so it is time to strike. He has decent moves in 25.♟e5†?! and 25.♟d4?!, both quite dangerous for Black, but not fully conclusive. **25.♟xd5!!** This is therefore the correct move. Black is not allowed to get organized. 25.♞a5?! is a less than dynamic way to play. White is better after 25...♟xc6 26.♞c7† ♟e7 27.♞xc6 ♞ad8± but there is no direct way to prove the advantage. **25...exd5 26.♞xd5†** The simplest. 26.♟e5†! also works. After 26...fxe5 27.♞xd5† ♞e6 White wins with: 28.♞f1†! ♟e7 29.♞xa8 ♟g7 30.♞a7 with such threats as ♞xd7† and ♞c5†. **26...♟e6 27.♟e5† fxe5 28.♞f1†!** 28.♞xa8? ♞xh5± would give Black a fighting chance. Obviously Black can meet 29.♞f1† with 29...♞f5 now. **28...♟g7 29.♞xa8 ♟c5** 29...♟e7 30.♞b7 ♞h4 31.♞h1 ♞f6 32.♞df1 and White wins material. **30.♞b7† ♟h6 31.♞f6† 1–0**

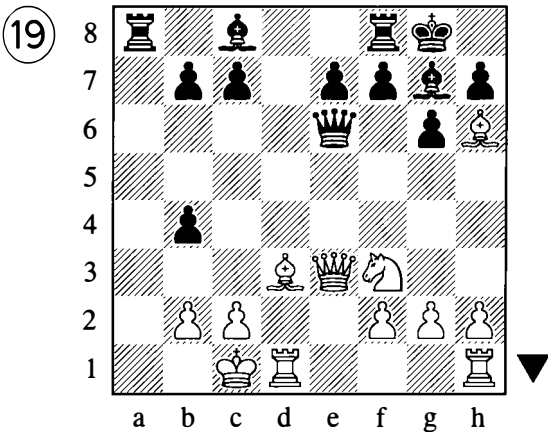
17. Michalik – Rapport, Merlimont 2011

26...♟f3! The white king's position is fragile and Black should not hesitate. 26...♟xb2?! 27.♞b1± is far less clear. **27.♟d3** Obviously White was never considering stripping his own king naked. After 27.gxf3 ♞g3† 28.♟f1 ♞xf3 Black is obviously winning. It will take a few moves, but he will get there. A possible line is 29.♟e1 ♞g3! 30.♞e2 (30.♟f1 ♞h2! is one of the points) 30...a6 with the idea of ...♟d4. **27...♞xe4?** Missing the main winning idea: 27...♞g3 28.♞f2 ♞g4! White should probably resign here. Everything is a disaster. **28.♟f2??** Blundering the queen. After 28.♞e1 ♞g4 29.b3! White's chances were not really worse! **0–1**

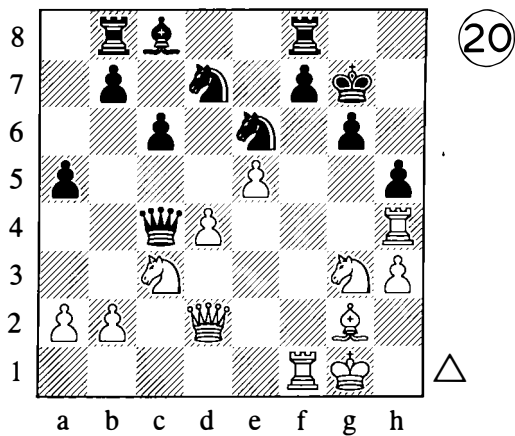
Nyzhnyk – Nepomniachtchi, Warsaw (rapid) 2011



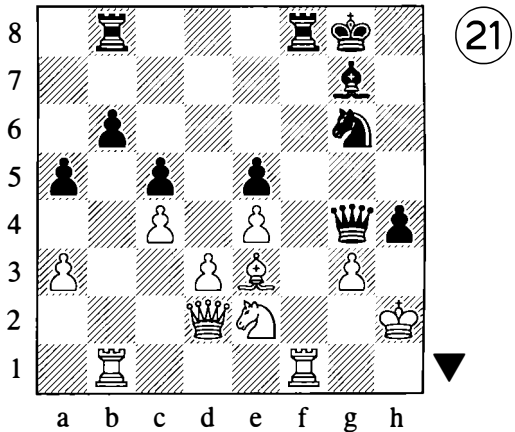
Nestorovic – Popchev, Stara Pazova 2008



Markland – Hort, Hastings 1970



Bauer – Kovchan, Mulhouse 2011



18. Nyzhnyk – Nepomniachtchi, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

A nice little combination based on one small surprise on move 29. **26...♟xf2! 27.♞xf2 ♟xd4 28.exd4 28.♟xd5 ♟xe3†** leaves Black a pawn up and better in all other regards. **28...♞xd4† 29.♞f1 ♞f6†!** The nice move. **30.♞g1 30.♟f4 ♟e3† 30...♞e2 31.♞c5 31.♞f1** fails to **31...♞d4†. 31...b6!** The white queen cannot hold the diagonal. **32.♟c3 ♟xc3 33.♞d4 ♞e1† 0–1**

19. Nestorovic – Popchev, Stara Pazova 2008

Black has a mating attack: **14...♟c3! 15.bxc3 bxc3 16.♟a6** The only defence, but Black has a mirroring idea. **16...♞xe3† 17.♟xe3 17.fxe3 ♞xa6 18.♞b1** offers a bit more resistance. Black wins in a long forced line after: **18...♞e8 19.♞d3 ♟f5 20.♞xc3 ♞ea8 21.♞e1 ♞a1† 22.♞b2 ♞8a2† 23.♞b3 ♟e6† 24.♞b4 ♞a4† 25.♞c5 ♞a5†! 26.♞d4 ♞d5† 27.♞e4 ♞a4† 28.♟d4 c5** and the endgame will be won eventually. **17...♞xa6 18.♞b1 ♟h3!** A beautiful idea. But **18...♟f5 19.♟d4 ♞a3 20.♟h4 ♞fa8 21.♟xc3 ♞xc3 22.♟xf5 gxf5 23.♞d7 e6** also wins easily. **19.♟d4 ♞b6† 20.♟b3 ♞xb3†! 21.cxb3 ♟f5† 22.♞c1 ♞a8 0–1**

20. Markland – Hort, Hastings 1970

23.♟d5! Freeing the g2-square for the queen with gain of tempo. White could also give a knight check first, with no great difference. **23...♞xf1†** Accepting the inevitable. Black is mated after: **23...cxd5 24.♟xh5† gxf5 25.♞g2† ♟h6 26.♞f5** (not **26.♞g4?? ♞xd4†!**) **26...♟g7** This allows White to finish the game in a beautiful way. **27.♞xg7† ♟xg7 28.♞g5† ♟h6 29.♞hxh5# 24.♞xf1 cxd5 25.♟xd5 25.♟f5†! gxf5 26.♞xh5** was a quicker win. **25...b6 25...♞h8** was better. **26.♟f4 26.♟xh5†! gxf5 27.♞xh5 f6 28.♞h6† ♟f7 29.♞h7† ♟g7 30.e6†** was the direct win. **26...♟xf4 27.♞xf4 ♟a6† 28.♞g1 ♟d3 29.♞g5 ♟h8 30.♞h6† 1–0**

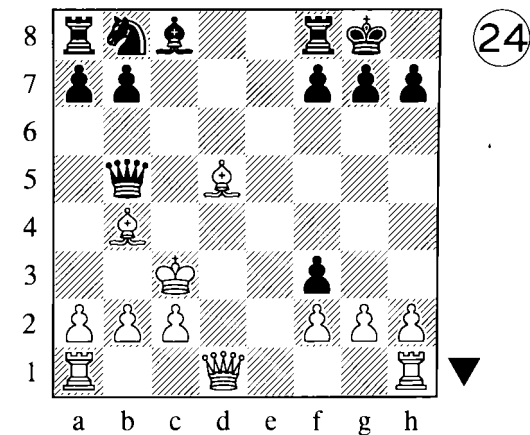
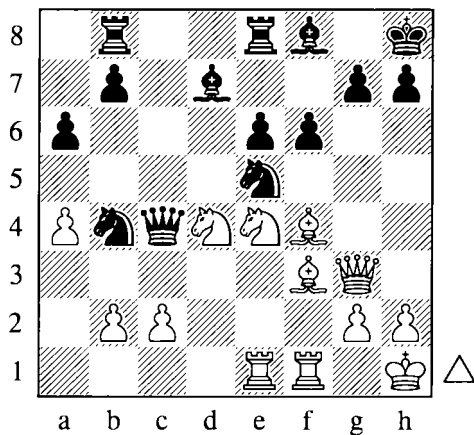
21. Bauer – Kovchan, Mulhouse 2011

This combination is not too difficult, but it is still possible to get it wrong. One of the reasons for this is that there are a lot of good moves, which potentially eclipse the direct win. **27...hxg3† 28.♟xg3 ♟f4!** Instead the French player had a lucky escape after **28...♟h4? 29.♞e2!** when Black could not find anything better than a perpetual check: **29...♟f3†** (**29...♞f3** would still have offered him some chances) **30.♞g2 ♟h4† 31.♞h2 ♟f3† 32.♞g2 ♟h4† 33.♞h2 ♟f3†! ½–½. 29.♟xf4** The fact that White is forced to open a line for the bishop should give Black some hope. **29...exf4 30.♟f5 30.♟e2** is not true resistance. The simplest is probably **30...f3 31.♟g3 ♟e5 32.♞g1 ♞h4# 30...♞xf5!** The direct route to the goal and the only move I accept as a solution. **30...f3?! 31.♞g1 ♞h5† 32.♞g3 ♞xf5 33.exf5 ♟e5† 34.♞f2† ♟f7** also gives Black a winning attack, but even here it is wildly complicated. **31.exf5 ♟f7! 31...♞h4†! 32.♞g2 ♞g3†? (32...♟e5! still gives a winning attack, but again we should not be here!) 33.♞h1 ♟f7 34.♞f2! =; 31...f3?! 32.f6 ♞e8 33.♞fe1 ♞xe1 34.♞xe1 ♞h4† 35.♞g1 ♟xf6** also gives a winning attack. But again, this is not a direct solution. **32.♞g2 ♞h8† 32...♞h5† 33.♞g1 (33.♞h3 ♞e2† also wins quickly) 33...♟d4† 34.♞f2 ♞g8** Finally we have a secondary solution the trainer is not displeased with! **33.♞g1 ♟d4† 34.♞f2 ♞g3! 35.♞bf1 ♞h2!** White loses everything.

Hou Yifan – Javakhishvili, Plovdiv 2010

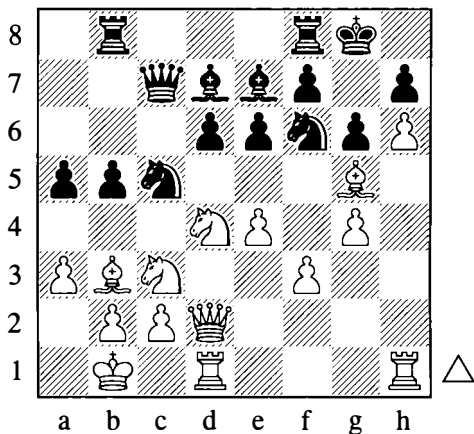
Fedorchuk – Martinovic, Aix-les-Bains 2011

22



Bezemer – T. Burg, Netherlands (var) 2011

23



22. Hou Yifan – Javakhishvili, Plovdiv 2010

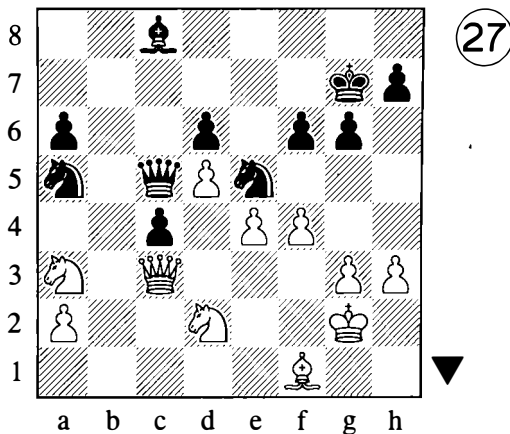
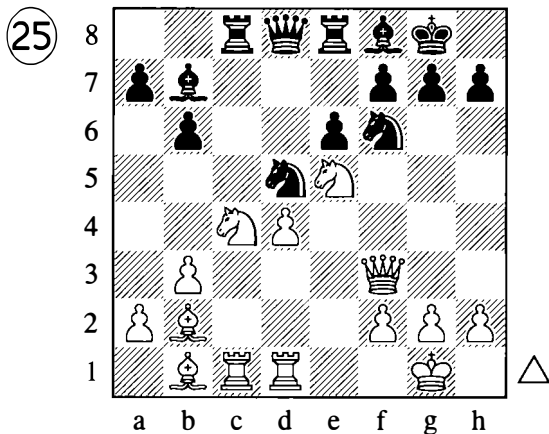
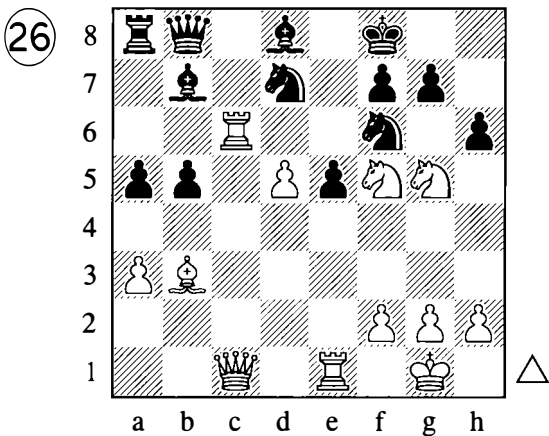
22.♙xe5! Freeing the g5-square for the knight. White has an alternative win at her disposal. If you saw this instead you did just as well. Winning is the objective here, not winning in a certain way. **22.♘xf6!** gxf6 **23.♙xe5** fxe5 **24.♙e4!!** Opening up the f-line and attacking h7. **24...♘c6** **25.♖f7** ♖e7 **26.♖ef1!** Black cannot defend h7, which is very bad news for her king. **22...fxe5** **23.♘g5 exd4** **23...♗xd4** **24.♙e4** once again illustrates the weakness of h7. One likely way for the game to finish is **24...g6** **25.♙xg6!** ♖e7 **26.♘f7†** ♙g8 **27.♙xh7†** ♙xh7 **28.♗h3†** ♙g6 **29.♖xe5** and mate is near. **24.♙e4!** h7 is the place it is all happening. **24...♙e7** **25.♘f7†** ♙g8 **26.♙xh7†** **1-0**

23. Bezemer – T. Burg, Netherlands (var) 2011

Bezemer demonstrated brilliant preparation in this game; he was ready with a beautiful combination should this position ever have come to pass. **18.♘f5!** gxf5? The best chance was the compliant **18...exf5** **19.♘d5** ♘xd5 **20.♙xe7** ♘xb3 (20...♘xe7? **21.♗d4** just mates) **21.♗xd5** and White will end up with a more or less winning advantage, although there is still a lot to be done. **19.♙h4!** ♙h8 **20.♗g5** ♖g8 **21.♗xf6†!** White is heading for glory. **21...♙xf6** **22.♙xf6†** ♖g7 **23.hxg7†** ♙g8 **24.♖xh7!** ♙xh7 **25.gxf5** exf5 **26.♙xf7** Mate follows – as pointed out by Bezemer.

24. Fedorchuk – Martinovic, Aix-les-Bains 2011

14...♙e6! A great tempo-gaining move. **14...♘c6?!** **15.♙xf8** ♙xf8 **16.b3** ♙e6 **17.♙xc6** ♗xc6† **18.♙b2** fxg2† gives Black a lot of compensation for the exchange, but nothing conclusive. **15.♙xe6** White also finds no salvation after: **15.♙xf8** ♙xd5 **16.♙a3** ♗a5† **17.♙b4** (17.♙d3 fxg2 **18.♖g1** ♘c6 followed by ...♖d8 is evidently winning for Black.) **17...♗c7†** **18.♙d2** ♗f4† **19.♙c3** ♗c4† and Black wins. **15...♘c6!** The point. Black's pieces are coming out of their hive too fast for White to fend them off. **16.♙xf8** ♗d6 fxe6 and Black wins. **16...♗e5†!** The white king cannot escape the hunt. **17.♙b3** This looks hopeless, but **17.♙c4** is no better. Black can simply take on f8 or he can go for the direct kill with **17...♗xe6†** **18.♗d5** ♘a5† **19.♙d4** ♖d8! and the queen is won. **17...♘d4†** **18.♙b4** ♗b5† **19.♙c3** ♘e2† **20.♙d2** ♖d8† **21.♙e3** ♗e5† **22.♙xf3** ♘d4† **0-1**

Kempinski – Korobov, Warsaw (rapid) 2010**Mena Crespo – Jimenez Fraga, Havana 2010****Schandorff – K. Kristensen, Denmark 2012**

25. Kempinski – Korobov, Warsaw (rapid) 2010

White has a winning combination based on the black queen's lack of good squares. **18. ♖xh7+!!** 18. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 19. ♖xh7 ♖d6 20. ♖e5+ would lead to rather unclear play after both 20... ♖f8 and 20... ♖xe5 21. dxe5 ♖xc1 22. ♖xc1 ♖e7 23. ♖e2 ♖xh7. **18... ♖xh7** 18... ♖xh7 19. ♖xf7+ ♖h8 20. ♖g6# **19. ♖xf7** The amusing thing is that the queen does not have a good square available. **19... ♖c7** All other moves lose as well: 19... ♖e7 20. ♖h3+ ♖g8 21. ♖h8+!! ♖xf7 22. ♖e5#; 19... ♖d7 20. ♖ce5 wins the queen immediately. After 19... ♖xc4 White can of course take the queen, but the simple 20. bxc4 offers an extra exchange with very little counterplay and no real challenges. **20. ♖ce5** White is winning. Black gives up the queen in order to fight on. **20... ♖g8** **21. ♖xc7 ♖xc7** **22. ♖g5?** This was of course a rapid game and White missed the clearest way to exploit his advantage due to the time shortage: **22. g4!** ♖c3 23. ♖h6+ ♖h8 24. ♖h3 should make Black's quest for counterplay a very difficult one indeed.

Instead the game concluded: **22... ♖c3** **23. ♖xc3** Losing a bit more of the advantage in return for clarifying the position. After 23. ♖d3 ♖xd1 24. ♖xd1 ♖ec8 25. ♖c4 White would also have a difficult task converting his advantage. **23... ♖xc3** **24. ♖xc3 ♖c8** **25. ♖d2+** Losing even more of the advantage. Stronger was 25. ♖b2! ♖c2 26. ♖c4+, intending to play ♖c1 and to meet 26... b5 with 27. ♖d2!. **25... ♖c2** **26. ♖xe6 ♖xa2** **27. ♖xf8 ♖xf8** **28. h3 ♖d5** **29. ♖b4+ ♖g8** **30. ♖c1 ♖xb3** **31. ♖c8+ ♖h7** **32. ♖f8 ♖d5±** **33. ♖a8 ♖f4** **34. ♖h2 ♖e6** **35. f3 ♖xd4** **36. ♖b4 ♖d5** **37. ♖f8 a5** **38. ♖c3 ♖e6** **39. ♖b8 ♖f4** **40. ♖xb6 ♖xg2+** **41. ♖h1 ♖c2** **42. ♖xa5 ♖xh3** **43. ♖b4 g5** **44. ♖d4 ♖e6 ½–½**

26. Schandorff – K. Kristensen, Denmark 2012

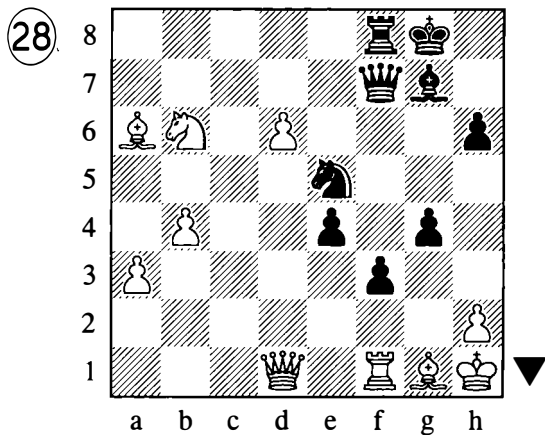
27. ♖xh6! gxf6 27... ♖xc6 28. dxc6 gxf6 29. ♖xf7! transposes to the game. **28. ♖xf7!?** This is a nice winning move, but maybe only the second most beautiful. While watching this game from a nearby board, I had spotted a more direct way: **28. ♖e6+!** fxe6 (28... ♖e8 29. ♖g7+ ♖f8 30. ♖xh6 ♖xc6 31. dxc6+–; 28... ♖e7 29. d6+ ♖e8 30. ♖xh6 ♖xc6 31. ♖h8+ ♖f8 32. ♖xf8+ ♖d7 33. ♖xf7+ ♖c8 34. ♖xd8+–) 29. ♖xh6+ ♖g8 (29... ♖e8 30. ♖g6+ ♖e7 31. ♖g7+ ♖e8 32. ♖xe6+) 30. dxe6 ♖xc6 31. e7+ ♖d5 32. e8=♖+ ♖xe8 33. ♖xd5# The game finished: **28... ♖xf7** **29. ♖xh6 ♖xc6** 29... ♖b6 is refuted by 30. ♖xb6! ♖xb6 31. d6+ and White wins: 31... ♖d5 32. ♖xd5+ ♖xd5 33. ♖xe5 with a mating attack. **30. dxc6+ ♖e7** **31. ♖d1!** The key move. The black king does not escape. **31... ♖b6** **32. ♖xd7+ 1–0**

27. Mena Crespo – Jimenez Fraga, Havana 2010

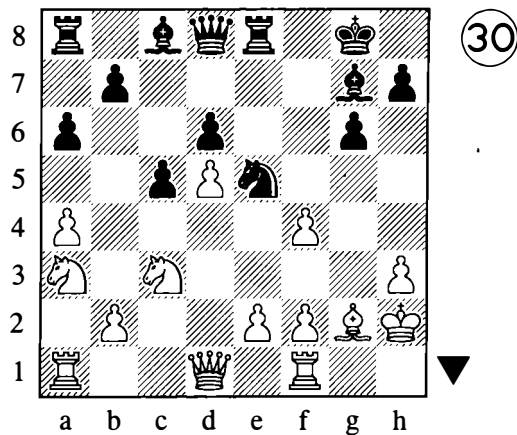
28... ♖xh3+!! **29. ♖h1** This is the toughest defence. In the game White played the more compliant: 29. ♖xh3? ♖g1! White is getting mated. 30. g4 The best try. (After 30. fxe5 ♖h1+ 31. ♖g4 dxe5! and 30. ♖g2 ♖d3 [or 30... ♖g4] White is rapidly mated.) 30... ♖xg4 31. ♖h4 (31. ♖g2 loses to almost anything. For example 31... ♖e3 32. ♖f3 h5! with the threat of ...h4.) 31... ♖e3 0–1 **29... ♖f3!!** This is the real point behind the combination. There is no good way to take the knight. 29... ♖xf1? 30. fxe5 ♖f2 31. exf6+ ♖f7 32. ♖xf1 ♖xf1+ 33. ♖h2 does not offer Black any advantage. **30. ♖xf3** 30. ♖xf3 ♖xf1 31. ♖c2 is an attempt to resist, but Black wins with active play: 31... ♖f2 32. ♖ce1 ♖xg3! 33. ♖xa5 ♖e2 34. ♖a3 ♖xf3+ 35. ♖xf3 ♖xf4 36. ♖g2 g5 White has a piece more, but the knight is pretty useless and the black pawns will just roll down the board with tremendous force. **30... c3** **31. ♖db1** The only move. **31... ♖xf1** **32. ♖c2** Again, the only move. 32. ♖xf1 c2 33. ♖xc2 ♖xc2 would leave Black positionally winning. For example: 34. ♖e1 ♖c4 and White is completely dominated. **32... ♖c4!** Threatening ...♖d3. **33. ♖xc3 ♖d3!** **34. ♖b4** 34. ♖e1 transposes. **34... ♖xc3** **35. ♖xd3 ♖a1+** **36. ♖g2 ♖xa2+** **37. ♖f2 ♖b7** Black has a pawn more and should win the endgame. With queens on there will always be some practical problems, but this is exactly what they are. Practical problems.

Jianu – Ilincic, Arad 2008

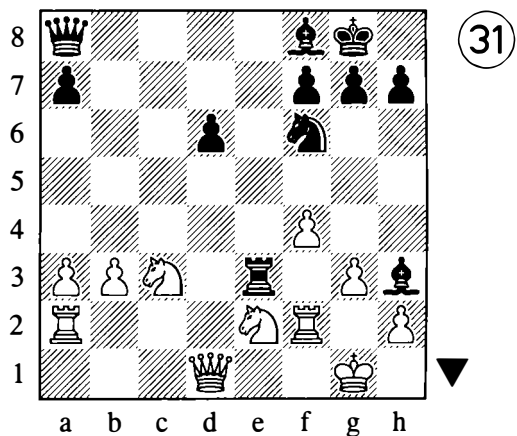
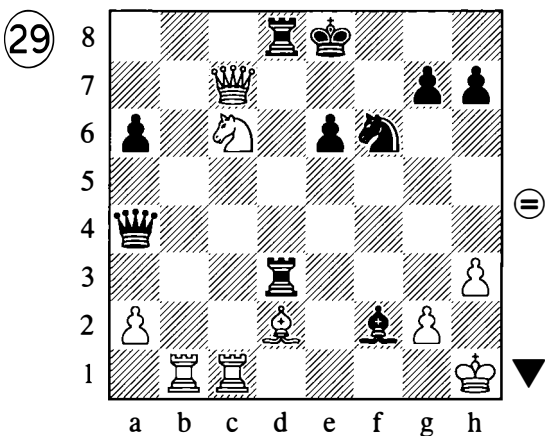
Gonzalez Perez – Aroshidze, Barbera del Valles 2011



Giri – Bawart, European Club Cup (var) 2011



Saidy – Ivkov, Polanica Zdroj 1969



28. Jianu – Ilincic, Arad 2008

White's weak spot is g2. Black has to get the queen close quickly. **33...g3! 34.hxg3 ♖h5† 35.♙h2 ♜h3! 35...♘g4? 36.♗d5†** and White wins. **36.♟f2?!** Not the best defence. 36.♟g1 ♘g4 37.♗c2 f2 is mate. 36.♗c2 e3 is less immediate. Black wins after 37.♘d5 e2 38.♘e7† (Objectively better is 38.♘e3. 38...♗xf1†! 39.♘xf1 e1=♗ is not 100% over, but Black should win.) 38...♘h8 39.♟g1 f2 40.♗xe2 fxg1=♗† 41.♘xg1 ♗d7! when he is in control and getting ready for ...♗a7†. **36...♘g4 37.♗d5† 37.♗c2 ♘xf2† 38.♗xf2 e3 39.♙f1** is not a defence. Black has both 39...♗e6! and 39...exf2 40.♙xh3 ♟e8! when a bishop on h2 has never ever felt as silly. **37...♘h8 38.♙f1 ♘xf2† 39.♔g1 e3!** A fantastic move to end the game. Without this Black would not win. Now White has to resign. **0–1**

29. Giri – Bawart, European Club Cup (var) 2011

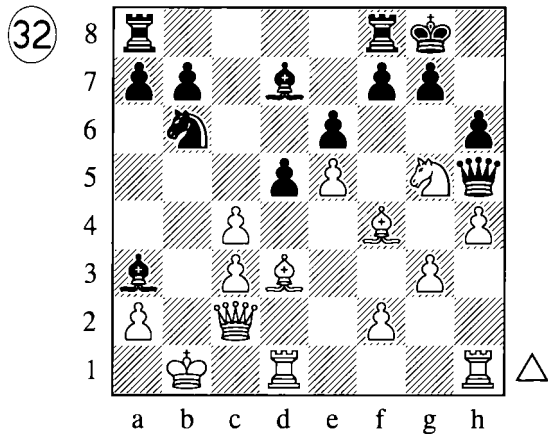
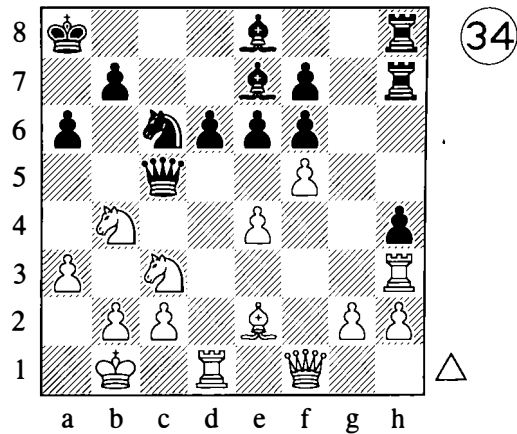
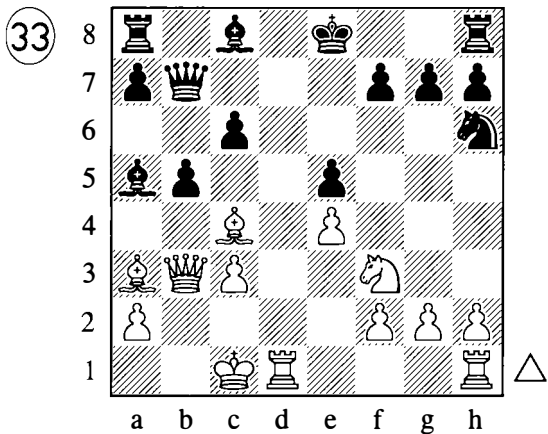
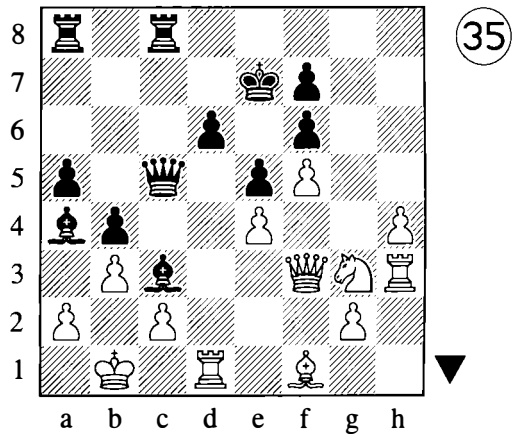
Black can survive with a perpetual check after a lot of sacrifices: **29...♟xh3†! 29...♟d3d7? 30.♗e5 ♗e4** does not work. White wins material with 31.♙a5! because of 31...♟c8?! 32.♟b8! ♟xb8 33.♗xb8† ♘f7 34.♘e5† ♘e7 35.♙b4†. **30.gxh3 ♗e4† 31.♘h2 ♘g4†! 31...♙g1†?** does not work. White wins after 32.♘xg1! ♗g6† 33.♘f2! ♗f5† 34.♙f4! and there are no more sensible checks. **32.hxg4 ♙g1†!!** This is the deep point. The king is distracted, as it cannot allow ...♟xd2†. **33.♘xg1 33.♟xg1? ♟xd2† 34.♘h3 ♗e3†! 35.♗g3 ♗h6† 36.♗h4 ♟h2† 37.♘h2 ♗xh4† 38.♘g2 ♗xg4† 39.♘f2 ♗f4†** and Black picks up the knight and eventually the full point. **33...♗xg4† 34.♘f1 ♗f3† 35.♘e1 ♗h1† 36.♘f2?!** The only winning attempt, but the queen sacrifice does nothing except delay the draw. 36.♘e2 ♗g2† is just a draw. **36...♗h4†!** The most accurate. After 36...♟xd2†?! 37.♘e3 ♗h6† 38.♗f4 ♟d3† 39.♘xd3 ♗xf4 40.♟b8† ♘f7 41.♟c5 White can play for a win, although his chances are slim. **37.♗g3?! ♟xd2† 38.♘e3 ♗xg3† 39.♘xd2 ♗d6†** Perpetual check.

30. Gonzalez Perez – Aroshidze, Barbera del Valles 2011

17...♗h4! 18.e3 18.fxe5?! leads directly to mate or something similar: 18...♗f4†! 19.♘g1 ♙xe5 20.♟e1 ♗h2† 21.♘f1 ♙xh3; 18.♗d2 ♙h6! I like this best although 18...♟f8 should also do the trick. 19.e3 ♘f3† Again the simplest. 20.♙xf3 ♗xh3† 21.♘g1 ♗xf3 The material is equal, but Black is evidently winning. **18...♙g4 19.f3 ♘xf3†! 20.♟xf3 ♟xe3!** This is the big idea of the combination. **21.♟xe3 ♙xd1 22.♘xd1 ♗xf4† 23.♘h1** And now Black could have won much faster with **23...♙e5** forcing White to give up the exchange and be behind in material as well as completely uncoordinated.

31. Saidy – Ivkov, Polanica Zdroj 1969

19...♟f3!! 20.♘d5!? White clearly relied on this riposte, but it does not work. White can struggle on after 20.♗c1 ♘g4 21.♟xf3 ♗xf3 22.♘d4 ♗d3 23.♘cb5!?, but it is a poor existence: 23...a6 24.♟e2 axb5† **20...♘xd5!** 20...♗xd5? 21.♗xd5 ♟xf2 22.♗xf7†! ♘xf7 23.♘xf2 would have offered White reasonable chances in the endgame. **21.♟xf3 ♘e3!** A beautiful move. **22.♗d3 ♗xf3 23.♘d4** The toughest defence, but not quite good enough. Black was also winning after 23.♘c3 ♙f5 24.♗e2 ♗xe2 25.♟xe2 d5!. **23...♗h5!** Black has a material advantage and won on move 46. The last tactical point is of course: **24.♗xe3 ♗d1† 25.♘f2 ♗f1#**

Holt – Milman, Berkeley 2011**Nepomniachtchi – Polgar, Ningbo 2011****Hector – Antonsen, Denmark 2010****Hou Yifan – Li Chao, Danzhou 2011**

32. Holt – Milman, Berkeley 2011

White wins using a traditional combination with a twist. 21.♔h7†! ♚h8 22.♙g8 g6 23.♜xf7† ♚g7!? Testing the opponent, but objectively it was better to play 23...♞xf7 24.♙xf7 ♙a4 25.♞xg6 ♞xg6† 26.♙xg6 ♙xd1 27.♞xd1 although the endgame is nasty: 27...♚g7 28.♙d3 ♞c8 29.♚c2 ♜xc4 30.♙xc4 ♞xc4 31.♞d4± 24.g4! ♞xg4 25.♞dg1 ♞f5 25...♙a4 26.♞d3 dxc4 27.♞e4 does not change anything. 26.♞xf5 exf5 27.♞xg6†!! The great point of the combination. 27...♚xg6 28.h5† ♚g7 29.♞g1# 1-0

33. Hector – Antonsen, Denmark 2010

14.♜xe5!! The game went: 14.♞d5? A very imaginative move, but Black has an easy way to defend with 14...cxd5 15.♙xd5 ♞c7! and after White takes on a8, Black takes on c3 with full equality. Instead the game concluded: 14...f6? 15.♞xb5! ♙b6 (15...cxb5 16.♙xb5† ♙d7 17.♞e6† ♚d8 18.♙xd7 ♞xd7 19.♞d1 and White wins) 16.♜xe5 ♞c7 17.♜xc6 ♙d7 18.♜e7 ♞f4† 19.♚b1 ♙d8 20.♜f5 ♞xe4† 21.♚a1 ♙xf5 22.♙d5 ♞e2 23.♙xa8 ♙e6 24.♙d5 1-0 14...bxc4 14...f6 15.♜xc6! wins immediately because of the threat to the a5-bishop. 15.♞xb7 ♙xb7 16.♞d7 White wins because of the 7th rank threats. 16...♙xc3 17.♞e7† ♚d8 17...♚f8 18.♞xb7† ♚g8 19.♜xc6 ♙f6 20.♞d1 leaves White in full control, even if the material is level right now. 18.♞d1† ♚c8 19.♜xc4 ♞d8 20.♜d6† ♞xd6 21.♙xd6 ♙a6 22.♙g3 White wins.

34. Nepomniachtchi – Polgar, Ningbo 2011

White has a good positional advantage after ♜b4-d3-f4, but Nepomniachtchi found a more direct way to win the game. 31.♙xa6!! bxa6 Nothing else works either. 32.♜xa6 White has a winning attack. 32...♞a5 Some other nice lines are: 32...♞e5 33.♜d5! exd5 34.♞b3 ♙d8 35.♜c7† ♙xc7 36.♞a6† ♜a7 37.♞b7#; 32...♞b6 33.♜a4! ♞a5 34.♞b3 ♙d8 35.♞xd6 White wins. There is no intelligent defence against 36.♞xd8† ♜xd8 37.♜c7† ♞xc7 38.♞a6† and mate in a few moves. 33.♜b5! White's attack is devastating. 33...♙d8 33...♚b7 34.♜bc7 ♚c8 35.♜xe8 ♞xe8 36.♞c4 ♚d7 37.fxe6† fxe6 38.♜c5† and White wins. 34.♞b3 34.♞xd6 was very natural, involving the rook in the attack. But at this stage anything wins. 34...♙b6 35.♜xd6 35.♞xd6!?!+ 35...♜e5 36.♜xe8 ♞xe8 37.♞d6 ♚a7 37...♙d8 38.♜c7† ♙xc7 39.♞a6† ♞xa6 40.♞xa6# 38.♞dx6 ♞xb6 39.♞xb6 ♚xb6 40.a4 ♞c8 41.♞b5† 1-0

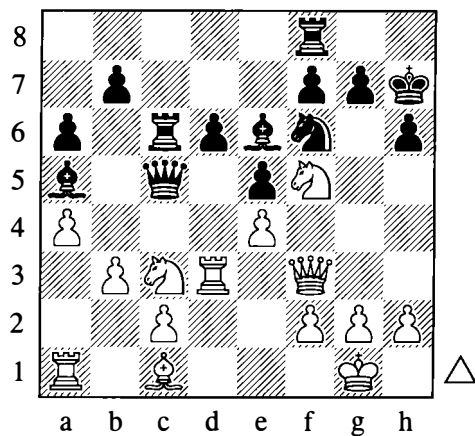
35. Hou Yifan – Li Chao, Danzhou 2011

A typical scenario for a combination. Black has put all of his pieces in attractive positions on the queenside while White has been distracted by a pawn grab on the kingside. Now comes the familiar choice – retreat or suicidal madness? 26...♙xb3! Suicidal madness it is then! 27.cxb3 27.axb3 a4 is of course just mate. 27...a4 28.♙c4 Practically forced. 28.bxa4 b3! would open up the white king's position decisively. 28...axb3 29.♙xb3 ♞xa2!! This is the beautiful point to the combination. The white king is stripped naked and ripe for ritual slaughter. 30.♙xa2 After 30.♚xa2 Black can force mate in two equally attractive ways: 30...♞a8† 31.♚b1 ♞a1† 32.♚c2 ♞xd1! 33.♚xd1 ♞d4† 34.♚e2 ♞d2† 35.♚f1 ♞e1# or 30...♞a5† 31.♚b1 ♞a1† 32.♚c2 ♙e1†! 33.♚d3 ♞c3† 34.♚e2 ♞b2† 35.♚f1 ♞xf3† 36.gxf3 ♞f2#. 30...b3! 31.♙xb3 ♞a3 32.♚c2 ♞b2† 33.♚d3 ♙a5! It is important to notice that you cannot use the same ideas against every continuation. Here the typical 33...♙e1? would spoil everything on account of 34.♙c4! ♞xc4 35.♚xc4 ♞c2† 36.♚b5 ♞c5† 37.♚a6 and Black does not have more than perpetual check! 34.♙c4 ♞xc4 35.♜e2 35.♚xc4 ♞c2† 36.♚b5 ♞c5† 37.♚a6 ♞b6# 35...♞c2† 36.♚e3 ♙b6† 0-1

Fedorchuk – Ponomarev, Melilla 2011

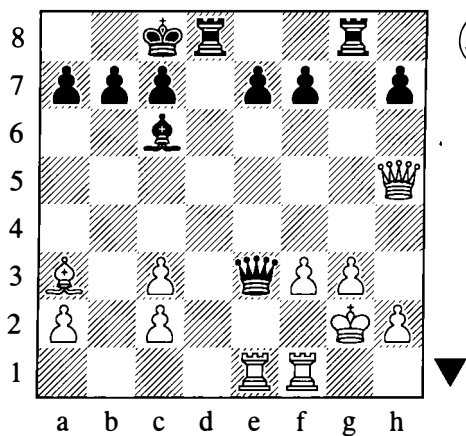
Twittersphere – London Classic GMs, Internet 2011

36



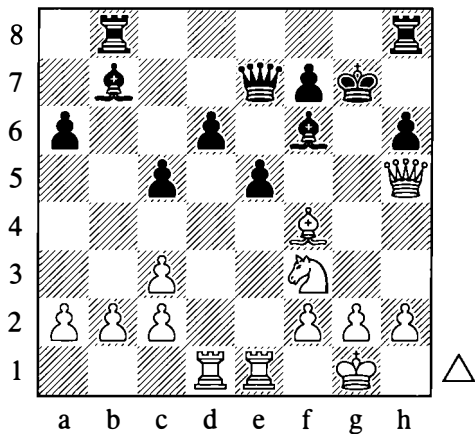
Hou Yifan – A. Muzychuk, Beijing (rapid) 2011

39



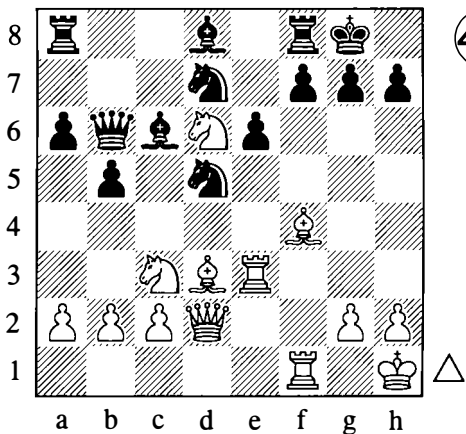
Maardell – Eklund, Lund 2010

37

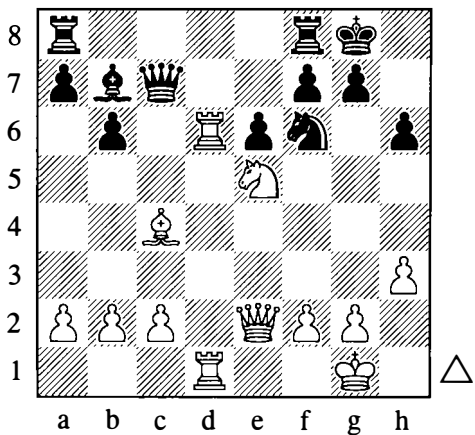


Caruana – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee (var) 2012

40



38



36. Fedorchuk – Ponomarev, Melilla 2011

20. ♖xg7! A standard combination with a twist. 20. ♙e3!? ♜xc3 (20... ♜b4 21. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 22. ♙xh6† ♖g6 23. ♖d5) 21. ♜xc3 ♜xc3 22. ♖xd6 ♜xc2 is of course great for White, but Black does have some counter-chances. **20... ♖xg7 21. ♙xh6† ♖g6** 21... ♖xh6 22. ♜xf6† ♖h7 23. ♜h4† ♖g7 24. ♜g3† ♙g4 25. ♜xg4# **22. ♖d5!** The aforementioned twist. 22. ♙xf8 ♙xc3 would also be winning if White could find the computer solution 23. h3! ♙xa1 24. ♜g3† ♖g4 25. hxg4 and Black has no defence against the ♜h4 attack. For example: 25... ♜c8 26. ♜h4 ♜xf8 27. ♜h3 and Black is mated. Should White not find 23. h3, he would still be much better, but not winning. **22... ♖h7 23. ♜g3† ♖h5** 23... ♖xh6 24. ♜h4† ♖g7 25. ♜g3† ♖h8 26. ♖f6 and Black is mated. **24. ♖f6† ♖xf6 25. ♜g5# 1-0**

37. Hou Yifan – A. Muzychuk, Beijing (rapid) 2011

White wins with a beautiful attack on the dark squares. **23. ♖xe5!** The World Champion from China is usually deadly in tactics, but in this case she missed her chance by retreating, and eventually failed to win the game: 23. ♙g3? ♙xf3 24. ♜xf3 ♜xb2± The game was drawn on move 35. **23... dxe5 24. ♜xe5 ♙xe5** 24... ♜f8 is not the type of move Hou Yifan would reject an attack because of. White wins slowly with: 25. ♜g4† ♖h7 26. ♜f5† ♖g7 27. ♜d3 and now for example 27... ♙h4 28. ♜ee3+-. **25. ♙xe5† f6** 25... ♖h7 loses to both 26. ♜d6! and 26. ♜f5† followed by 27. ♙xb8. **26. ♜g4†** White wins after 26... ♖f7 27. ♙xb8, 26... ♖f8 27. ♜d6 or 26... ♖h7 27. ♜d7.

38. Caruana – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee (var) 2012

This position could have arisen in the game, allowing White a fantastic combination which the computer does not spot immediately: **20. ♜xe6!!** 20. ♜d7?! ♜c8! 21. ♖xf7? ♖xd7 22. ♖xh6† ♖h7! 23. ♜h5 ♖f6= transposes back to the actual game. **20... fxe6** The only test. 20... ♜ad8 21. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 (21... ♜xd8? 22. ♖xf7!) 22. ♖c6 is just a clean pawn up. 20... ♙a6 21. ♜ed6+– **21. ♙xe6† ♖h8 22. ♜d7!! ♖xd7?!** Walking the plank for your entertainment, dear spectator to this fictional scene. 22... ♜xe5! 23. ♜xe5 ♖xd7 24. ♙xd7 is a technical win for White, but still with some play left. **23. ♖g6† ♖h7 24. ♜d3** Black is mated.

39. Twittersphere – London Classic GMs, Internet 2011

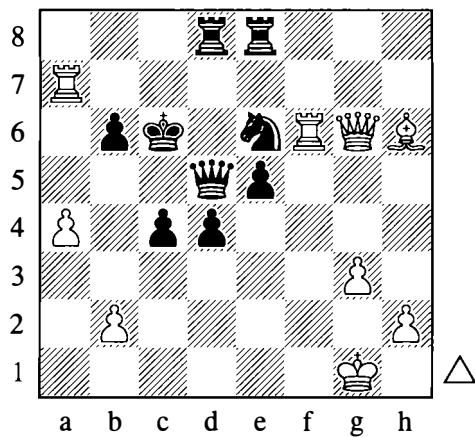
This game was played by Twitter, with White being “the world” and Black being the collective of grandmasters participating in the London Chess Classic. At this point the grandmasters missed a nice combination. **18... ♜xg3†!!** The game was won by the grandmasters anyway after 18... ♜xc3?! 19. ♙xe7 ♜d2† 20. ♖h1? (20. ♖g1 ♜xc2 would give Black the advantage, but the game is not yet decided.) 20... ♜f2! 21. ♜f5† ♖b8 22. ♜xf2 ♜xe1† 23. ♖g2 ♜xe7 0–1 **19. hxg3** 19. ♖xg3 ♜g8† simply wins: 20. ♜g4† ♜xg4† 21. ♖xg4 ♙xf3† 22. ♖g3 ♙e2† and so on. **19... ♜d2† 20. ♖h1** 20. ♖h3 ♙d7† 21. g4 ♜f4 leaves the white king frail and unprotected. A common image for attacking players. 22. ♜h1 ♜xf3† 23. ♖h4 ♜g2 White cannot defend the g4-pawn. For example: 24. ♜eg1 ♜f2† 25. ♖g5 ♜f6# **20... ♙xf3†!!** This is the move the grandmasters missed. **21. ♜xf3 ♜h6†** White is mated.

40. Maardell – Eklund, Lund 2010

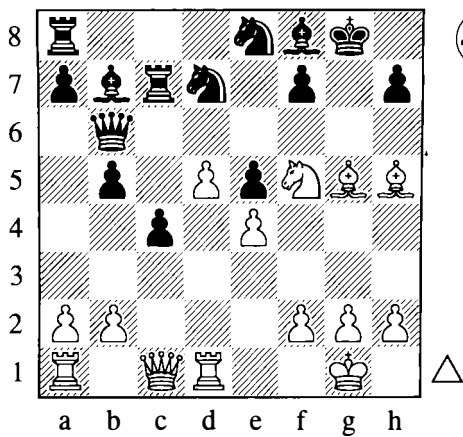
21. ♙xh7†!! The beginning of a very nice combination. 21. ♜h3? f5 22. ♖xd5 ♙xd5 23. ♙xf5 ♖f6 is not overly dangerous for Black. **21... ♖xh7** 21... ♖h8 22. ♜h3 just wins. **22. ♜h3† ♖g8 23. ♙h6!** The difficult move to find. **23... ♙f6** 23... g5 24. ♙xg5 and 23... f5 24. ♙xg7 both cut through the opponent’s position like a hot knife through butter. **24. ♜xf6** White could exchange knights first. **24... ♖7xf6 25. ♙xg7 ♖g4 26. ♙f6!** The quickest mate. **26... ♖f2† 27. ♜xf2 ♜xf2 28. ♜h8# 1-0**

Riazantsev – Karjakin, Poikovsky 2010

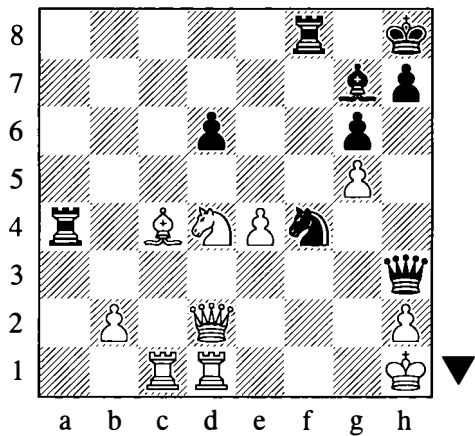
41

**Miljkovic – Zontakh, Serbia (var) 2011**

43

**Le Quang Liem – Feller, Lubbock 2011**

42



41. Riazantsev – Karjakin, Poikovsky 2010

John Shaw gave me this as an exercise and I am pleased to say that I solved it pretty quickly. The principle is a known one: try to keep the opponent's king close to an obvious killing zone. Translated into this game, this means that you should not allow him to get too far away from his current unpleasant position. Indeed, in the game once the king crossed the middle, Black was better. **33.♔f8!!** Threatening ♖f7. Black is forced to take it. The game continued: 33.♖f7?! ♕c5 34.♔d2 c3 35.♖c7? After this further mistake White loses the remains of his advantage. Eventually, after more mistakes by both players, Black won the game on move 49. Instead White should have played: 35.bxc3 ♕c4 36.cxd4 ♔xd4+ “Where White is better, but due to the active position of the king Black has practical chances for a draw” – Karjakin. **33...♖xf8 34.♖xe6† ♜d6** 34...♕c5 35.♖c7† ♕b4 36.♖xb6† with mate to follow. **35.♖h7!** 35.♖ae7 ♖xe6 36.♖xe6† ♕c5 37.♖xb6 also looks good, but it is a mirage. Black makes a draw with the only move available to him, a revenge check: 37...♖f1†! 38.♕xf1 ♖h1† 39.♕f2 ♖xh2† 40.♕f3 ♖h1† 41.♕g4 ♖d1† 42.♕g5 ♖d2† and the white king cannot escape because the rook on b6 needs the sixth rank support. **35...♕c5 36.♖c7† ♜c6 37.♖e7† ♜d6 38.♖c7†** White wins.

42. Le Quang Liem – Feller, Lubbock 2011

32...♖xc4!! is a beautiful winning combination. Instead Black played: 32...♖aa8?= 33.♖g1 ♖ae8 34.♖g3 ♖h5 35.♔f3 ♔h3 36.♖g2 ♔f4 37.♖c2 ♖c8 38.b3 d5 39.exd5 ♔xd5 40.♖d3 ♔f4 41.♖f1 h6 42.b4 ♖f5 43.♖e1 ♖c8 44.gxh6 ♖xh6 45.♖g1 ♔h3 46.♖g2 ♔f4 47.♖d2 g5 48.♔d4 ♖d6 49.♖d1 ♖e5 50.♔f3 and a draw was agreed. **33.♖xc4 ♔xd4 34.♖xd4† ♕g8** Surprisingly White cannot defend sufficiently against the threats on the light squares. **35.♖f2** The only move to cover both squares, but it has its own defects. **35...♔d3 36.♖g2** Forced. 36.♖e2 ♖f2+ **36...♔f2† 37.♕g1 ♖xg2† 38.♔xg2 ♔xd1+–**

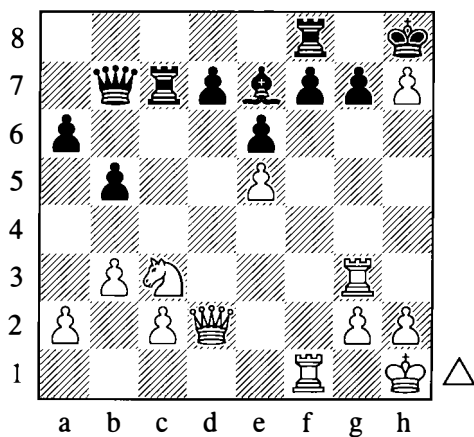
43. Miljkovic – Zontakh, Serbia (var) 2011

This intriguing position would have given White a shot at immortality, had it occurred in the game. White wins with a fine combination: **25.d6!** 25.♔d8 ♖xd8 26.♖g5† ♕h8 27.♖xd8 ♔df6 does not work. Black is in full control and has an extra piece. **25...♔xd6** We will take this as the main line. There is no defence, but there are a lot of other tries: **25...♖cc8** 26.♔h6! would give White a very strong attack. For example: 26...♔xe4 27.♖g5† ♔g7 28.♔xg7 ♔xf5 29.♔xf8† ♔g6 30.♔e7 and White is completely winning. **25...♔xd6** is refuted by the brilliant 26.♖xd6! ♔xd6 27.♔f6!! ♔c5 (27...♔xf6 28.♖g5† ♕f8 29.♖xf6! makes it impossible for Black to avoid mate for long. For example: 29...♕e8 30.♔xd6† ♔d7 31.♔g4† ♕c6 32.♔xc4† and so on.) 28.♖g5† ♕f8 29.♔h6 (29.♖d1!?) 29...♕e8 30.♖g8† ♔f8 31.♔xf7† ♔d7 32.♖g4† and White's attack is evidently decisive. **25...♖c6** 26.♔h6 ♖d8 27.♔xf8 ♔xf8 28.♔h6† ♕g7 29.♔xf7 ♖f6 30.d7 and White wins. Now back to the main line: **26.♔d8!! ♖xd8 27.♖xd6** The most attractive, but White is also winning after 27.♖g5† ♕h8 28.♖xd8. **27...♔xd6 28.♖g5† ♕f8 29.♖g7† ♕e8 30.♔xd6† ♕e7 31.♔f5† ♕e8 32.♖xf7#**

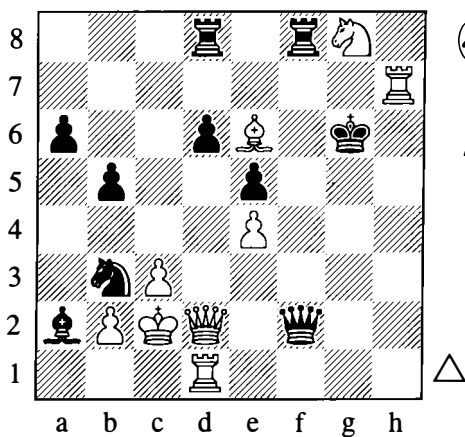
Hou Yifan – Movsesian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

Taksrud – Christensen, Helsingor (var) 2011

44

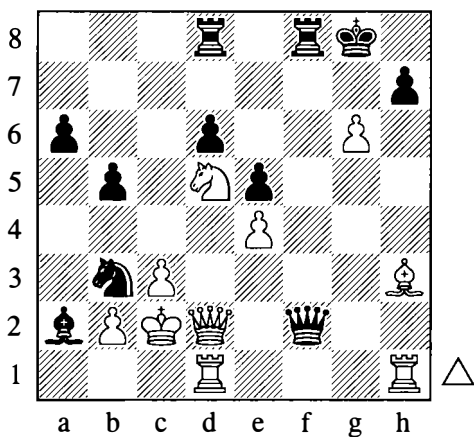


46



Taksrud – Christensen, Helsingor 2011

45



44. Hou Yifan – Movsesian, Khanty-Mansiysk (1.2) 2011

White could have equalized the match with a double sacrifice, of her rook and her passed pawn on the 7th rank. **30.♖xg7!!** The game continued: 30.♖d4? f5? (30...♞c5 31.♖xg7 ♜xg7 32.♞g4† ♜xh7=) 31.♜e2? (31.exf6 ♞xf6 32.♞f3!±) 31...g5 32.♜f4?? gxf4 33.♞xf4 ♞e4+ 34.♞xe4 fxe4 35.♞xf8† ♜xf8 36.♞g8† ♜xh7 37.♞xf8 ♞xc2 38.♜g1 ♞xa2 39.h4 e3 40.♜f1 a5 41.♞f7† ♜g6 42.♞xd7 ♞f2† 43.♜e1 ♞xg2 44.♞d3 ♞g3 45.♞d6 ♜f5 46.♞a6 ♜xe5 47.♞xa5 ♜e4 48.♞a6 ♜f3 0–1. **30...♜xg7 31.h8=♞†!! ♞xh8** 31...♜xh8 32.♞h6† ♜g8 33.♞f6!! is an important point, and might be what Hou Yifan missed. Black is mated after: 33...♞e8 34.♞g5† ♜f8 35.♞h5! ♜xf6 36.exf6 and all the king's rooks and queens can't put his kingside together again. **32.♞f4! ♜d8!** The best defence. 32...♞f8 33.♞g4† ♜h6 34.♜e4 also gives White a winning attack. Black should maybe give up the queen, but the prospects would then look very grim. And after the natural try 34...♞xc2 White mates with: 35.♞f6†! ♜xf6 36.♞f4†! ♜g6 (36...♜h5 37.♜xf6† ♜g6 38.♞g4† is mate in a few moves too.) 37.♞xf6† ♜h7 38.♞h4†! ♜g7 39.♞g5† ♜h8 40.♞h6† ♜g8 41.♜f6# **33.♞xf7† ♜h6 34.♞f3! ♞xf3! 35.♞xf3** This ending is winning for White, although there will be some complications in proving this statement.

45. Taksrud – Christensen, Helsingor 2011

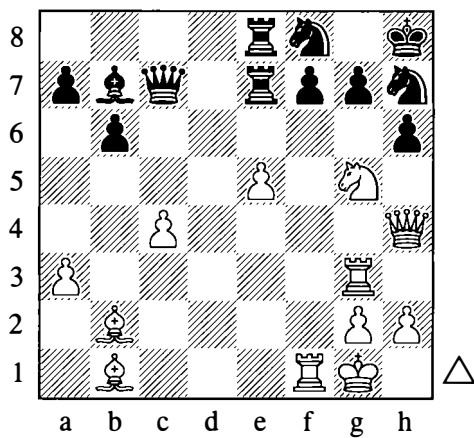
26.♜e6† The first two moves of this combination are not surprising in any way. Instead in the game White was simply worse after 26.gxh7†? ♜h8+ and eventually resigned on move 46. **26...♜g7 27.♞xh7† ♜xg6 28.♜e7†!** An attractive idea. In an article Christensen gave 28.♜f5†? ♞xf5 29.♜e7† as the winning line, but in fact 29...♜f6! 30.♜d5† ♜g6 only gives White a perpetual. The probable reason for this slip is that he saw the computer's line and then inputted it incorrectly when he wrote the article later on, without re-checking the moves. **28...♜xh7 28...♜f6 29.♜g8†!** The quick mate is very attractive. (Although for calculation it is far more practical to just see 29.♞xf2†.) 29...♜g6 We shall see this in the following exercise. **29.♜f5†!** If I was writing a different book, I would call this a reloader. The theme is actually quite nice: White wins by giving a check on f5 with first the bishop and then the knight, in order to strip the black queen of her protection with tempo. **29...♞xf5 30.♞h1† ♜g7 31.♜xf5† ♞xf5 32.♞h6†** White wins.

46. Taksrud – Christensen, Helsingor (var) 2011

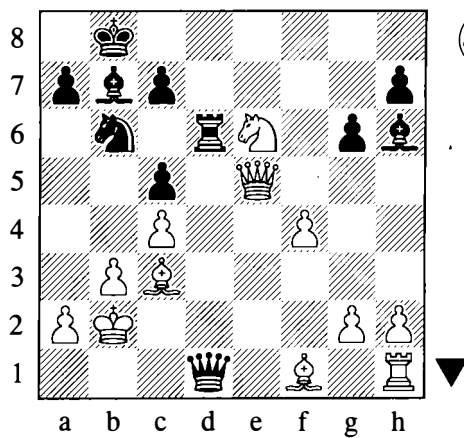
White mates with a double rook sacrifice and a novel mating pattern. **30.♞h6† 30.♞g1†?** ♜xh7 only gives a perpetual check. White needs to force Black to take the rook. **30...♜g7 31.♞g1†!** A beautiful decoy. Black has to give up the pin. 31.♜xb3!? ♞xd2† 32.♜xd2! also wins, because of 32...♜xb3? 33.♞g1† ♜f7 34.♞h7† ♜e6 35.♞e7#, so 32...♞xg8+ is forced. **31...♞xg1 32.♞h7†!** The rook returns now that the white queen is no longer pinned. **32...♜xh7 33.♞h6#** A rare and exceptional motif.

Koneru – Ushenina, Mardin 2011

47

**Kotsur – Volokitin, Moscow 2011**

48



47. Koneru – Ushenina, Mardin 2011

White could have won the game with: **41. ♖xh7!** Instead she played: 41. ♖xh6? gxh6? Missing the chance to draw. (41... ♖c5†! 42. ♘h1 ♖xc4 steals the winning blow away from White. 43. ♖xg7†! [43. ♔d3? gxh6 44. ♔xc4 ♖xg5 is a very suspicious piece sacrifice] 43... ♖xg7 44. e6† [44. ♖xf7†? ♖g6 45. ♖xg6† ♖f8 wins for Black] 44... ♘h6 45. ♖h3† ♖xg5 46. ♖f5† ♖g4 White only has perpetual check here.) 42. e6† f6 43. ♖xf6 ♖g8 44. ♖f7†; 41. ♔xh7?! ♖xh7 42. ♖xf7† ♖xf7 43. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 44. e6 ♖e7 45. ♔xg7† ♖xg7 46. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 47. ♖g3† ♖f6± obviously favours White, but there is no direct win. **41... ♖xh7 42. e6!** 42. ♖xg7?! ♖xg7 43. e6† ♖g8 44. ♖xh6 ♖c5† 45. ♖f2 f6 46. ♔xh7† ♖xh7 47. ♖g6† ♖g7 48. ♖xe8† ♖h7 49. g3 ♔c6 50. ♖d8 ♖e3 51. ♖f1 ♖xe6 52. ♖xf6 is a long line that favours White. But will she actually win. Probably yes, but it is a lot of calculation for a very limited outcome. **42... f6 42... fxe6 43. ♖xh6 43. ♖xf6! gxf6 44. ♔xf6† ♖xf6 45. ♖xf6† ♖g7 46. ♖xh6† ♖h7 47. ♔xh7** Black is mated.

48. Kotsur – Volokitin, Moscow 2011

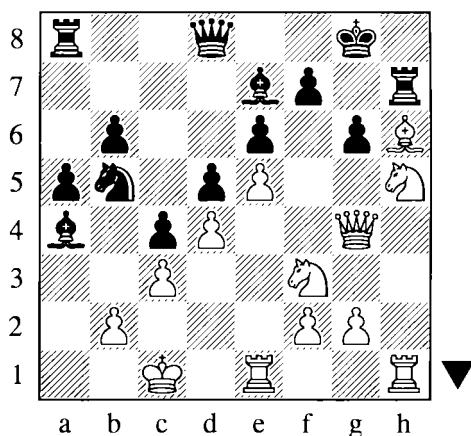
22... ♔c8! In the game both players erred: 22... ♔g7? 23. ♖xg7? Black now wins as can be seen in position 47 on page 33 Instead 23. ♖xg7! ♖xe6 24. ♔a5 ♔e4 25. ♖c3 ♖b1† 26. ♖a3 ♖d6 is dangerous for White, but he might yet live to tell about his fears. **23. ♖xc5** There are no other moves. **23... ♖d2† 24. ♔xd2** 24. ♖a3 ♔f8 is absolutely deadly. White loses after either 25. ♔xd2 ♖xd2 26. b4 a5! or 25. ♔d3 ♖xh1 26. ♔xd2 ♖d7!, winning a piece. **24... ♖xd2† 25. ♖a3** 25. ♖b1 ♔xf4 and White is mated. **25... ♔xf4 26. ♖e4 ♔d6** White is simply dead lost. The following line is just an example of how it could end. **27. ♖c6 ♖a5† 28. ♖b2 ♔e5† 29. ♖c2 ♖c3† 30. ♖d1 ♔g4† 31. ♔e2 ♖a1† 32. ♖d2 ♖b2†** with mate to follow.

Chapter 3

Prophylaxis

Ni Hua – Vikramaditya Kamble

Chennai 2011



Black to play

Originally it was my intention not to include this position in the book, but Sabino Brunello solved it after something like 45 minutes – by logical reasoning as much as by deep calculation – so I decided to leave it in here for the guys aspiring for 2600 and beyond.

One of the concepts in chess that makes most sense to us logically, but at the same time lies furthest from our minds, is the idea of paying attention to the opponent's ideas and counter-chances. We call this prophylaxis.

The reason it is so logical is because everyone understands that the two players have equal chances and opportunities in the game. But at the same time we are always so much more interested in ourselves and our ideas than in those surrounding us.

So, consciously thinking about the opponent's intentions, possibilities and ideas is one of the most potent techniques in chess. It empowers us to frustrate our opponent's progress at the same time as we advance our own by choosing better move orders, better transit squares, intermediate moves and just in general staying one step ahead.

Prophylaxis is mainly thought of as a positional theme; you try to form your strategic concepts based on advancing your own goals and at the same time restricting your opponent in his endeavours. Indeed it is such a powerful tool that it would not be unfair to point to prophylactic thinking as the greatest contribution to chess thinking from such esteemed theorists as Nimzowitsch and Dvoretsky. Both Karpov and Petrosian are known as mainly prophylactic players; great minds who foresaw the opponent's opportunities long before he was able to see them himself.

But prophylactic thinking can also be very useful in tactics. I would have guessed that it would be more useful when on the defensive, had I not worked on the material in this book; now I am not so sure. Understanding your opponent's defensive ideas is a big part of a successful attack.

So, in this chapter we shall look at some tactical moments where paying attention to the opponent's counter-chances is of specific

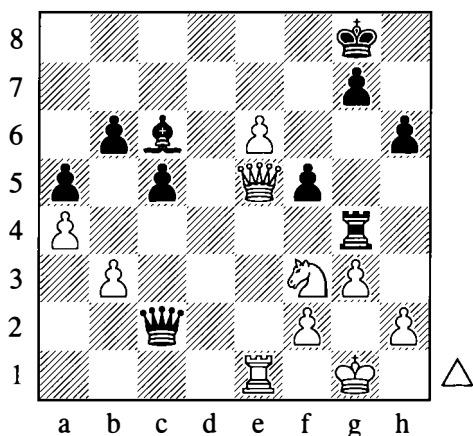
importance. Mainly we have positions where we should win with normal play, but where the opponent's defensive resources (whether hidden from plain sight or not) should be taken into account and dealt with in our approach.

Before we get going, I have one last point to make. Paying attention to the opponent's counter-chances does not mean that we have to react like victims to them. At times our opponent will not have any ideas or perhaps his ideas will be flawed. **What is important is that we always look at them seriously.** Prophylaxis is meant to increase the scope of our thinking, not become a panic button.

The first position I have chosen to illustrate this topic is quite rich, but hopefully not too mindboggling (even if it proved challenging enough for the white player). White is just winning and with good calculation he would be able to seal the game quite quickly. But White did not fully take into account Black's defensive resources and how to deflate them.

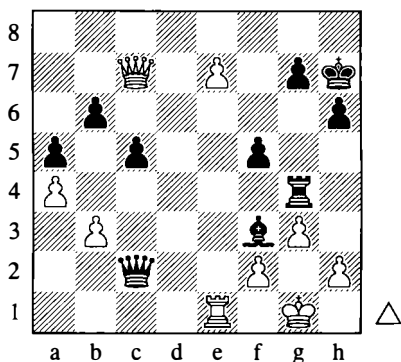
Ismael Karim – Abhijeet Gupta

Gibraltar 2012



White has many promising options at this point. The e-pawn is, simply put, very strong.

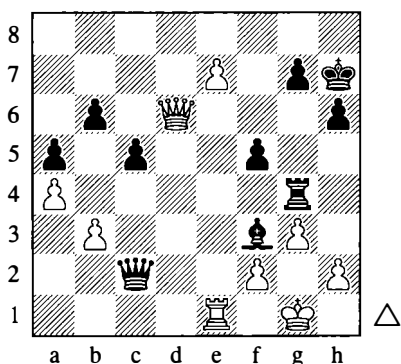
Let us as an example say that White plays **28.♖c7 ♜xf3 29.e7**, which looks completely winning. Black can now try **29...♙h7!**.



It is very tempting to simply advance the e-pawn with **30.e8=♖?** and maybe this was indeed what White intended during the game, until he realized that after **30...♜e4! 31.♞xe4 fxe4** things were not so simple! For example: **32.♖b5 e3!** and it is time for White to pull the emergency brakes with **33.♖xg7!** with a perpetual check.

However, rather than panic and abandon the queen on c7, White could have looked deeper and seen that **30.♖c8!** would win the game. Black cannot play **...♜e4** and White will queen the pawn.

Or he could have refined the idea with **28.♖d6!**, when Black's trap is even more useless. After **28...♜xf3 29.e7 ♙h7**



White can safely play **30.e8=♖**, as **30...♜e4** is met strongly with **31.♖dg6#!**.

Or there is **28.♖b8! ♙h7 29.♖c8!** when the attack on the bishop is combined with an indirect attack on f5, which we have come to appreciate the importance of.

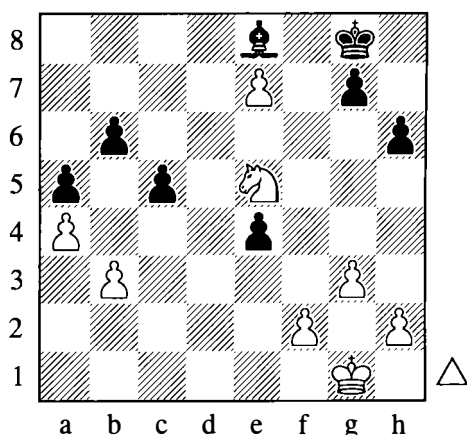
Actually, White had a lot of ways of winning quickly, but they all involved taking his opponent's intentions and opportunities into consideration. Had he done this, he would certainly have won and the variations are not that complicated.

Awful as it may sound, chances are that he did not even look at attacking the bishop. So, instead of all this, Black was allowed to escape to a lost ending:

28.e7? ♜e4

Like in every line above, this is still the intention. White has not lost all of his advantage, but now he has to prove it all over again.

29.♞xe4 ♖xe4 30.♖xe4 fxe4 31.♙e5 ♜e8



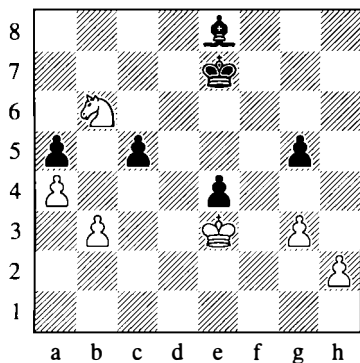
This is the last interesting moment for us in this game. At this point Black wants to play **...g5** and get the king to f6 to get rid of the e7-pawn and activate the bishop. Should he

succeed in this he has a fair fighting chance, which is exactly what happened in the game when White played 32.♖c4?!. Eventually Black won.

White should have played 32.f4!.

Black could then either give White a tempo with: 32...exf3 33.♖f2 g5 34.♖xf3 ♖g7 35.♖e4 ♖f6 36.♖c4 ♖xe7 37.♖xb6 ♖e6 38.♖c4, when White is in control and his king very strong.

Or he could play 32...g5 as planned. But this also has a drawback. After 33.fxg5 hxg5 White will first activate the king and take the b6-pawn with 34.♖f2 ♖g7 35.♖c4 ♖f6 36.♖e3 ♖xe7 37.♖xb6.



Only then will he start to look at taking the e- or a-pawn, giving him an extra pawn, as well as the very handy opportunity to play h2-h4 and create a passed h-pawn, a drawback of 32...g5 Black would just have to live with.

I know this last point is more strategic than calculation, but then chess is not really 99% tactics, although chess strategy does rely heavily on tactics.

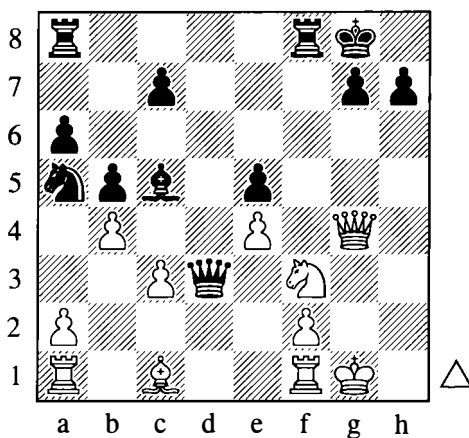
Positional evaluations are always important, also when we are calculating tactics. But please do not think that this is the reason for prophylactic thinking in tactics. One important idea in calculation is to understand exactly what your opponent is intending and

avoid his hidden resources and play the best move (if you are doing well that is. If you are on the run, the Traps Chapter provides the kind of “prophylaxis” you need). The difference is often stark when we are coming to (what should be) the final moments of the game.

Here is an excellent example of this:

Hannes Stefansson – Vishal Sareen

Reykjavik 2011

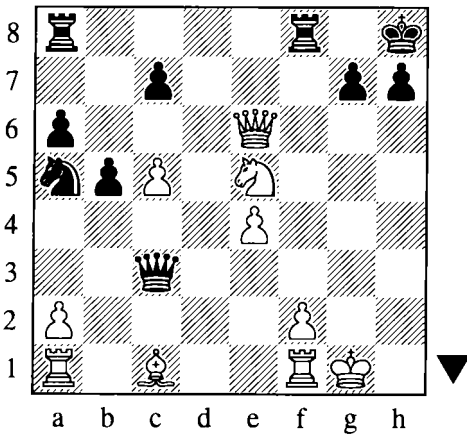


An early tactical skirmish has landed us in a complicated situation where Black has won a pawn, but White has several attractive moves. One of them is extremely attractive indeed and possibly White played it rather quickly, as all resistance seems futile. At least, this is the way several of my students have reacted.

18.♖xe5?

Hitting the queen, saving the knight and preparing for a mating attack – not to mention regaining the pawn and leaving the black pieces forked. What more could you want from a move? Well, that it was winning would be a great addition!

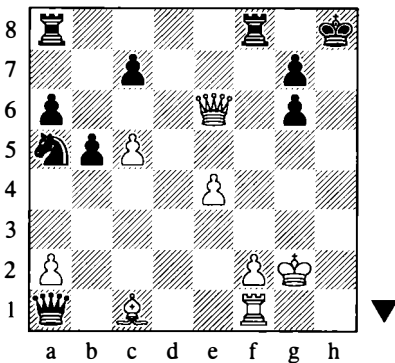
18...♖xc3 19.♖e6† ♖h8 20.bxc5



20...♟f6?

This is a bit sad. I would have liked to see the white player (with whom I have no quarrel) be punished for his carelessness.

Both players were certainly expecting 20...♟xa1 to be refuted by a couple of moves. The first of these would be to play 21.♘g6† h×g6 22.♔g2, when apparently Black is about to be mated.

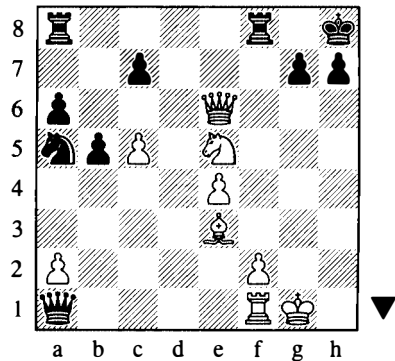


It is certainly easy to pack your bags at this point and I am sure that many amateur games would have ended here with a 1–0 on the scoresheet. But if Black had the correct form of prophylactic thinking, he would have approached this position with the understanding that appearances are not everything and just because we see the opponent's idea and it is scary, it does not

mean that we immediately accept it as being unavoidable.

Most of the time we will of course be wrong to question such assumptions, but could you imagine the happiness Sareen would have been able to take from this game, had he been allowed to gain a draw with 22...♟xf2†!, when White has nothing better than 23.♟xf2 ♟xc1 24.♟f3! and should consider himself lucky that the threat is strong enough to force Black to take a perpetual check.

But this thinking only brings us a bit further. What if White anticipated this defence as well? What if this made him refine his malicious mating intentions into the seemingly automatic, but in reality more advanced, 'winning' line with 21.♔e3 in order to protect f2 before choosing the mating combination.



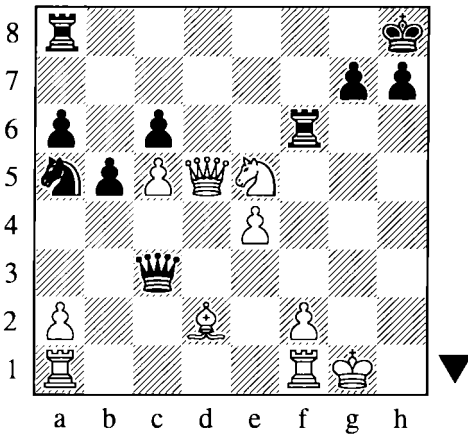
And indeed, the first thought is that Black is forced to play something like 21...♟b2?, when after 22.♘g6†! h×g6 23.♔g2 Black is simply mated.

But looking a bit deeper we will find that Black has an intermediate move in 21...♟f6!!.. Had this happened the grandmaster would no doubt have been in shock, but none the less realized that he has nothing better than perpetual check with 22.♘f7† as Black would be able to enjoy his extra exchange after 22.♟d5 c6!♞.

This shows us another aspect of prophylactic thinking that we should take very seriously.

But this is all a parallel reality. In the game White cruised to victory.

21. ♖d5 c6 22. ♔d2!



A nice intermediate move that decides the game, if not completely at the board, then at least in the players' minds.

22... ♗h3

22... ♗xa1 23. ♖xa1 cxd5 24. ♔xa5 dxe4 25. ♖e1± is also very dangerous for Black.

23. ♖d3 ♗h5 24. f4 ♘c4 25. ♗f3 ♗h4?!

25... ♖g6† 26. ♘xg6† ♗xg6† 27. ♗g2 ♘xd2± was the last chance.

26. ♔e1! ♗h6 27. ♘xc4 ♖g6† 28. ♔g3 1–0

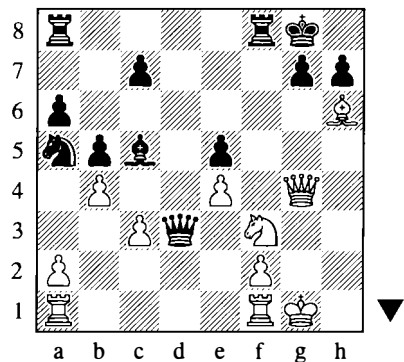
Quite complicated, but if you had chosen to play like this, it would have been a warning that you have not fully understood what calculation is about. I have worked with and talked with enough top players to know that players of all levels suffer from the *hammer syndrome*, known from the saying “for the man with a hammer everything resembles a nail.”

They calculate well and for this reason rely on it to an excessive degree. At times so much that it becomes their Achilles heel.

In this case Stefansson most likely saw all the way to 22. ♔d2! and was quite pleased with himself after the game. Or maybe he checked the game with a computer and was surprised that his opponent had a brilliant idea and started blaming himself for missing it.

But although it would be a good thing if he had calculated better, far more practical advice would have been to calculate less. Look at different winning options and find the one that includes least calculation. This is what I have been telling my students who also fell for this “trap” and went for this long mating line.

18. ♔h6 won easily, but still my pupils constantly fall for the same “trick” that Stefansson fell for. The attraction is to one strong-looking (albeit complicated) move instead of taking a more structured look at the position and seeing that there is more than one attractive move.



The threat of mate (and the development of the bishop) are in themselves pretty attractive. Actually, once you get going, the attractions of the move start piling up, but these are of course all of a general nature. What about the concrete aspects?

First of all there is 18...♖f7, which is easily refuted by 19.♘xe5 ♜xc3 20.♘xf7, when White is just a rook up.

So there is only one other defence against mate-in-one that makes any sense. But after 18...g6 White is not going to take the rook on f8, but instead play 19.♜e6†, when all calculation is superfluous. 19...♖f7 can be refuted by 20.♘xe5 as well as the flashy 20.♞xf7†. And 19...♙h8 20.♞xe5† is mate immediately. There simply are no branches.

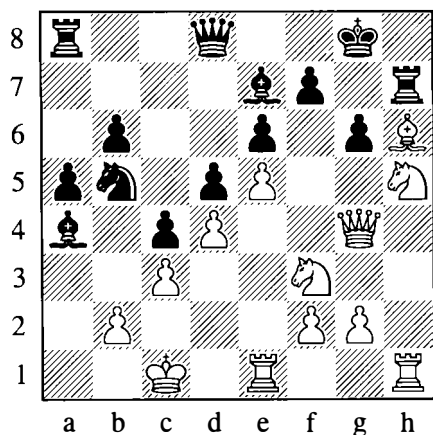
The Complicated Scenario

There are times when we are calculating really complicated positions where we have to look deep to understand the opponent's intention in order to meet them early enough for our response to be possible. This is one of the aspects of chess that we all find truly fascinating, and maybe where we are most impressed by the achievements of others.

I was, for example, more impressed by Sabino Brunello than I have been with most of his impressive results, when he managed to work out this position correctly.

Ni Hua – Vikramaditya Kamble

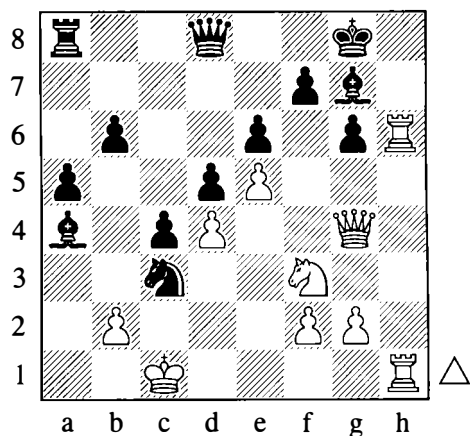
Chennai 2011



True to his style Ni Hua has just sacrificed a piece with 24.♙xh6!?. I am quite sure that this was not based on computer-like penetration of the position, but rather on the deep feeling for dynamics I often find when I analyse Ni Hua's games. The result is a deeply complicated and difficult position and in the game a quick win for White!

The game continued:

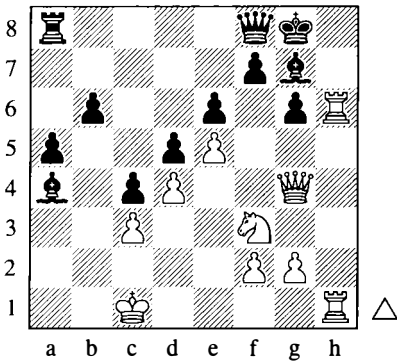
24...♖xh6? 25.♘f6† ♙xf6 26.♖xh6 ♙g7 27.♖eh1 ♘xc3!?



28.♘g5!! ♘a2† 29.♙b1 ♙c2† 30.♙xc2 ♜d7 31.♞h4 ♜a4† 32.♙d2 ♜b4† 33.♙e3 ♙f8 34.♖h8† ♙xh8 35.♞xh8† ♙e7 36.♞xa8 ♞b3† 37.♙f4 1-0

A very impressive attack, but not everything had to be this way. If Black had the range to see White's intentions he would have been able to adjust his reaction. From moves 24-27 there are some ...♘d4 moments that would have complicated matters, but White is still winning all the same.

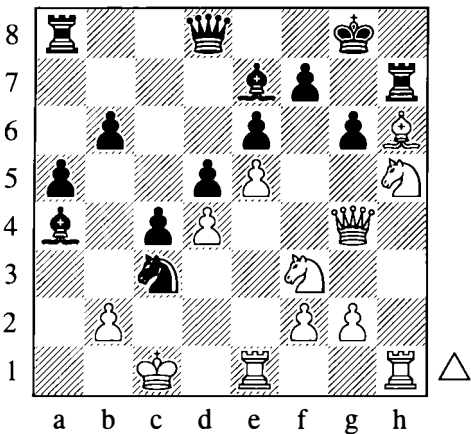
The key moment to look out for is of course move 28, when 28.bxc3? would have been met strongly with 28...♞f8! and Black's counterplay even secures him an advantage in the endgame:



29.♖h7 ♖a3† 30.♔d2 ♜b2† 31.♔e3 ♜c2!
32.♜h4 ♜d3† 33.♔f4 ♜e4† 34.♔g3 ♜xh4†
35.♗7xh4 ♔c6= White's attack is gone and he
is starting to miss his queenside pawns.

Using this realization, in combination with a
strong handling of intermediate moves, would
make it possible to find the best move:

24...♘xc3!!



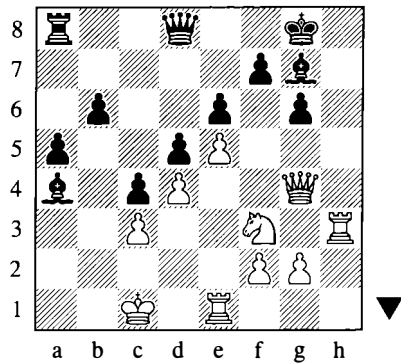
By understanding what White is intending
with his piece sacrifice down the line, it is
possible to see that this version of events can
be refined rather than prevented, creating
something close to complete chaos.

I seriously doubt that there are any players
in the world who would be able to solve this
position using “pure calculation” and simply

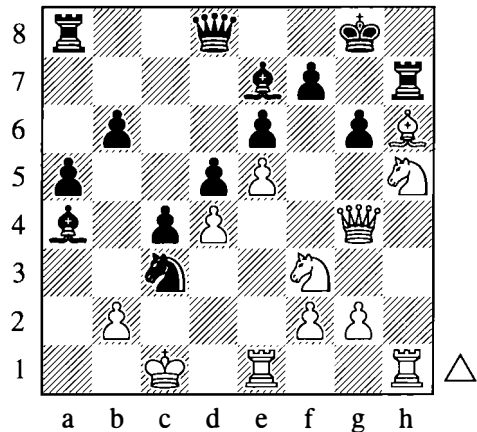
hammer away move by move. There are too
many complications, as you will know if you
have worked with the position yourself.

It is a cheap trick to simply throw about long
variations generated by a computer here, where
things are so complicated that the only way to
solve the position is to understand what White
is intending and throw in an intermediate
move early on.

If White takes the knight and proceeds as in
the game, we already know what will happen.
But instead of 28.♗eh1? White will be able to
play 28.♗h3! instead:



However, the weakness in the white position
remains the same. Black plays 28...♜f8 all
the same and White should consider himself
lucky that he can play 29.♘g5 ♖a3† 30.♔b1
without giving Black more than a draw.

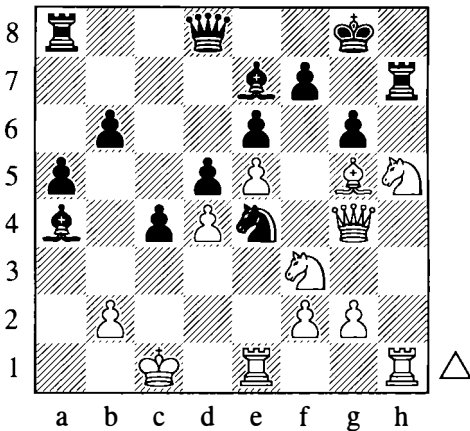


But rather than weakening his king's position by taking the knight, White should try to weaken the dark squares around the black king with:

25. ♖g5

But here we shall see another great point behind Black's counter-sacrifice. The knight can now assist the defence!

25... ♜e4!



The knight has gone from the queenside to the centre in two powerful blows. Black's chances are no worse.

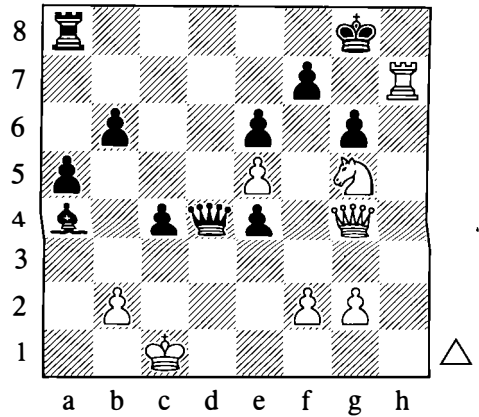
26. ♖xe4!

Only a drawing combination this time around.

26. ♖xe4? ♜xe7 27. ♖xe4 is weaker. Black plays: 27... ♖xh5 28. ♖xh5 dxe4 29. ♜xe4 gxh5 30. ♜xa8 ♜f8+ with better chances in the endgame.

The following is relatively forced:

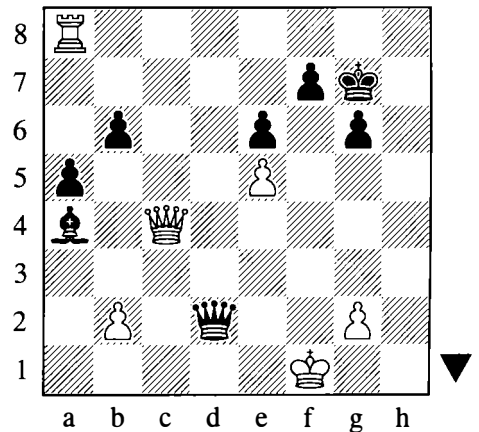
26... dxe4 27. ♜f6+ ♖xf6 28. ♖xh7 ♖xg5+ 29. ♜xg5 ♜xd4!



30. ♖h8+

After 30. ♜xf7 ♜xh7 31. ♜g5+ ♜g8! White does not have more than a perpetual check.

30... ♜g7 31. ♖xa8 ♜xf2 32. ♜xe4 ♜g1+ 33. ♜d2 ♜d1+ 34. ♜e3 ♜c1+ 35. ♜f2 ♜xg5 36. ♜xc4 ♜d2+ 37. ♜f1



The complications have led to some sort of dynamic equality or maybe directly to a draw by perpetual check:

37... ♖b5!? 38. ♜xb5 ♜f4+ 39. ♜g1 ♜d4+

I apologize for this very complicated position. I hope it has not scared anyone away. I was going for the effect of having a seemingly impossible position, which is solved by not too

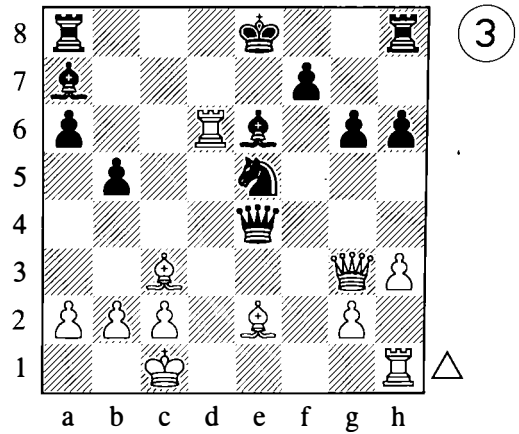
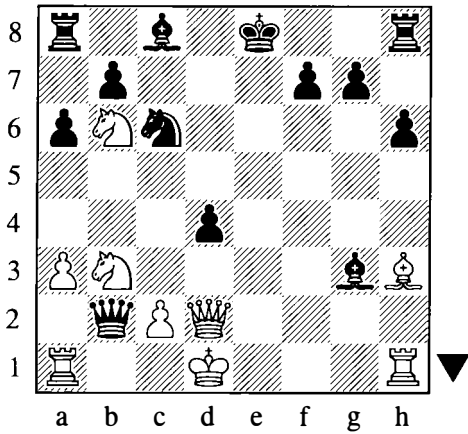
many variations of calculation and a healthy dose of rationality.

The method of comparison would probably also have been useful here. The idea is to think a bit differently than move, move, move.

Or we could talk about 24... Δ xc3 as an intermediate move! All of these techniques are meant to help us find the right ideas and improve our problem-solving ability. Please use them as such and not as Soviet marching orders that must be obeyed.

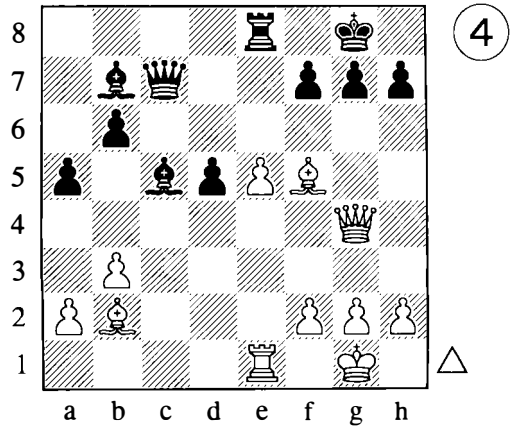
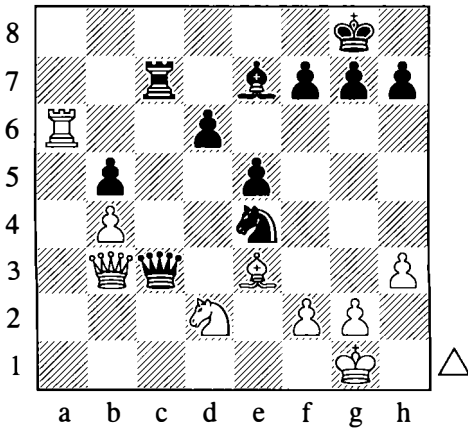
Guseinov – P.H. Nielsen, Aix-les-Bains 2011

Adair – Palliser, Sheffield 2011



Zawadzka – N. Kosintseva, Heraklion 2007

4. V. Georgiev – Petkov, Albena 2011



1. Guseinov – P.H. Nielsen, Aix-les-Bains 2011

The game continued: **20...0-0?** 21.♘a4 ♖xa1† 22.♘xa1± White was somewhat better and won on move 57.

20...d3! was the right move, making it possible for the queen to escape if threatened, and leading to a winning attack if White grabs material. For example: **21.♘xa8** 21.♙xc8 0-0 is hopeless for White. **21...0-0 22.♙xc8 dxc2† 23.♙e2 ♙f4!** winning everything.

Advancing the d-pawn a move later is also playable: **20...♙xh3** 21.♙xh3 d3 22.♘xa8 ♙f4!±

2. Zawadzka – N. Kosintseva, Heraklion 2007

In the game White ruined a great opportunity by playing **29.♙a8†** ♙f8 30.♘e4, and after **30...♖c6!** 31.♙xf8† ♙xf8 32.♖d3 ♙e7 the chances were even and the game was drawn in 63 moves.

White was thinking along the right lines, but it is necessary to get the move order right: **29.♘e4!** ♖xb3 **30.♙a8† ♙f8** 31.♘f6†! ♙xf6 **32.♙h6** White wins.

3. Adair – Palliser, Sheffield 2011

27.♙xe5? Allowing Black a chance to simplify the position. **27...♙f2?** Black could have solved most of his problems with **27...♖e3†** 28.♖xe3 ♙xe3† 29.♙b1 0-0±. White was no doubt banking on **27...0-0?** 28.♙f3! ♖e3† 29.♙b1, where the double threat of ♙xa8 and ♙f4 would secure a big advantage; especially with ♙xa6 up his sleeve too. **28.♖f3!** ♖xe5 28...♖xf3? 29.♙xf3 would lose the exchange. **29.♙xe6† ♖xe6?** 29...fxe6 was preferable. After **30.♖xa8† ♙e7** 31.♖b7† ♙f6 32.♖f3† ♖f5 33.♖c3† e5 34.♖a3± White would not yet have managed to eliminate all counterplay, even if victory was likely. **30.♖xa8† ♙e7** 31.♖xh8 ♖xe2 **32.♖c3 ♙f8** 33.♖f3 ♙e3† 34.♙b1 ♖xf3 35.♙xf3 ♙g7 36.♙e1 ♙c5 37.c3 ♙f6 38.♙c2 ♙f5 39.♙e4 1-0

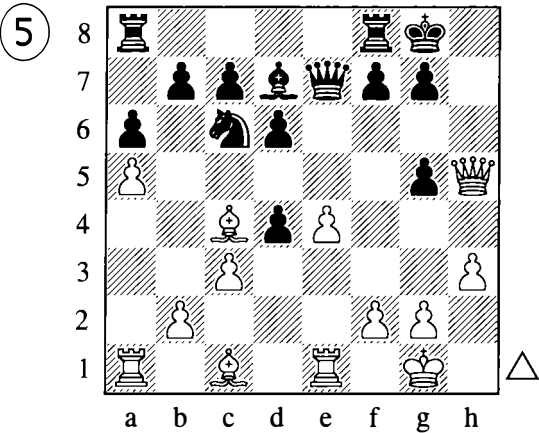
It was much stronger to play **27.♙xb5†!** axb5 **28.♙e1 ♖f5** 29.♙xe5, although you might get spooked by Black's only move, **29...♙f2!**. But not to worry, White can simply play **30.♖h2!**, when after **30...♙e3†** 31.♙xe3 0-0 **32.a3** White has every chance of winning the game with his extra pawn and strong dominance on the dark squares.

4. V. Georgiev – Petkov, Albena 2011

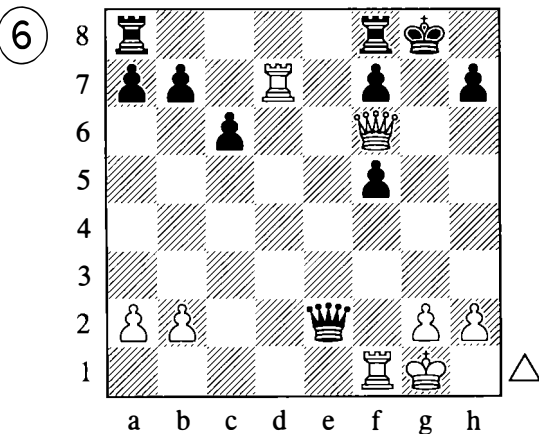
Black has a few tricks that White has to avoid in this position. Some players avoid them by chance, others spot them, while still others do not see them and don't solve the position. The first point to note is that **20.♙xh7†?** ♙xh7 21.e6 does not transpose to the game. Black has an important resource in **21...♙f8!**, when he is winning because **22.♖h5† ♙g8** 23.exf7† ♖xf7 does not result in a capture on e8 with check.

White correctly played: **20.e6!** d4 20...♙f8 does not really work as a defence. For example 21.h3!? and Black does not have a good move. But there is also an attractive direct win: **21.exf7† ♖xf7** 22.♙e6 ♙h8 23.♙e3 and White is winning on account of **23...♖c7** 24.♖g6!. **21.♙xh7†!** The correct active move, and not too difficult once you see it. Here a great trick is **21.exf7† ♖xf7** 22.♙e6 ♙h8!, when after **23.♙e2** (planning ♙c4), Black has **23...♖f6** with even chances. It should be said that 21.h3!? is also pretty strong – but I doubt that any human would ever seriously consider such a move here. **21...♙f8** Or **21...♙xh7** 22.♖h5† ♙g8 23.exf7† ♖xf7 24.♙xe8† and White wins. **22.♙f5** White is winning. **22...♖c6** 23.♖h3 fxe6 **24.♙g6 ♙d8** 25.♙c1 1-0

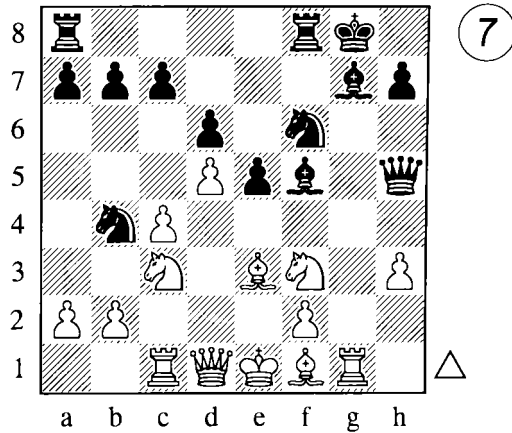
Rendle – Luaces Rubio, Hastings 2012



Gordon – A. Hunt, Sheffield 2011



Khairullin – Sutovsky, Aix-les-Bains 2011



5. Rendle – Luaces Rubio, Hastings 2012

Black is planning all his defensive activities around the use of the e5-square. He needs it in virtually all lines. Therefore White should remove it from his custody immediately. **17.e5! dxe5** After 17...dxe5 18.♙xg5 ♖e8 19.cxd4 White wins material – sometimes the simplest solutions are the best. Nor does Black fare any better if he does not take the pawn. 17...♙f5 18.♙xg5 ♖d7 19.♙f6! d5 20.♙xd5! wins for White. For example: 20...♖xd5 21.♖xf5 gxf6 22.♖g4† ♕h7 23.♖e4 and Black has to give up the queen in one way or another. 17...♙e6 18.♙xg5 ♖d7 19.♙f6! gives the usual attack on the dark squares. For example: 19...♙e7 20.exd6 ♙f5!? An attempt to resist, but it does not work. (20...cxd6 21.♙xe7 ♖xe7 22.♙d3 g6 23.♙xg6 wins easily.) 21.g4 ♙xc4 22.gxf5 ♖xd6 23.♙xg7 ♕xg7 24.♖g5† ♕h7 25.♖e4 Black is mated. **18.♙xg5 ♖c5** White also has a winning attack after 18...♖d6 19.♖e4 ♙e6 20.♖h4 f6 21.♙d3 f5 – for example with the natural attacking move 22.♖f1. However, there is a nice direct win with: 22.♙e2! ♙d5 23.♖h7† ♕f7 24.♖h6! and ♙h5† wins everything. After 18...♖e8 19.♙f6! White again has a winning attack. **19.♖e4** 19.♙f6!? is also winning. **19...♖xc4 20.♙f6!** Black is mated. **1–0**

6. Gordon – A. Hunt, Sheffield 2011

30.♖xf5? ♕h8? After 30...♖xb2!∞ it is questionable whether we can speak of a white advantage at all. **31.♖f6† ♕g8 32.♖f5? 32.♖e7!** is extremely strong: 32...♖d2 33.♖e4 h5 34.♖e5 and mate is near. **32...♖e1† 33.♖f1 ♖e3† 34.♕h1 ♖e6±** Black is not fully out of the woods, but he is close. **35.♖xb7 ♖xf6 36.♖xf6 ♖ab8 37.♖xb8 37.♖xa7! ♖xb2 38.h3 ♖c2 39.a4±** was the last chance to create winning chances. **37...♖xb8 38.b3 ♖d8 39.h3 ♖d2 40.a4 ♖c2 41.♖d6 ♕g7 42.b4 ♖a2 43.♖xc6 ½–½**

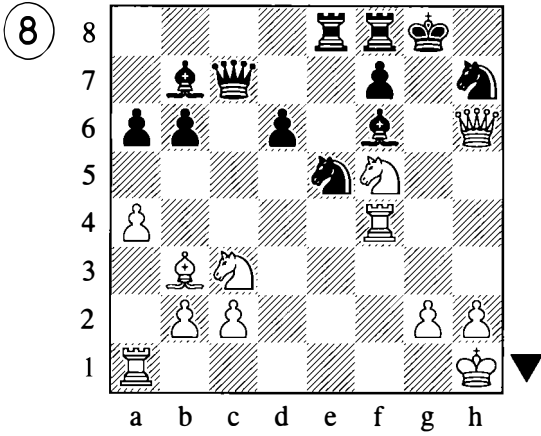
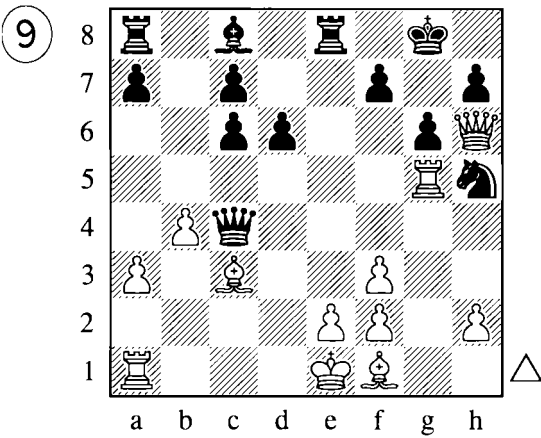
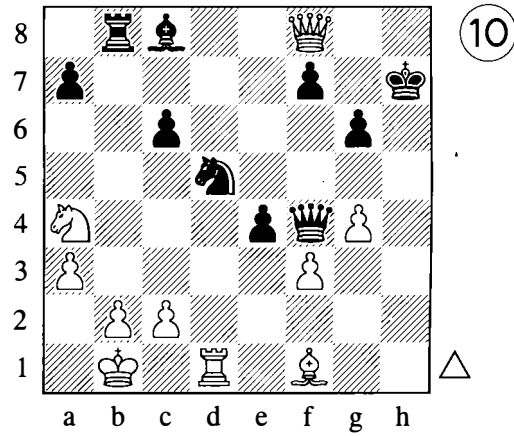
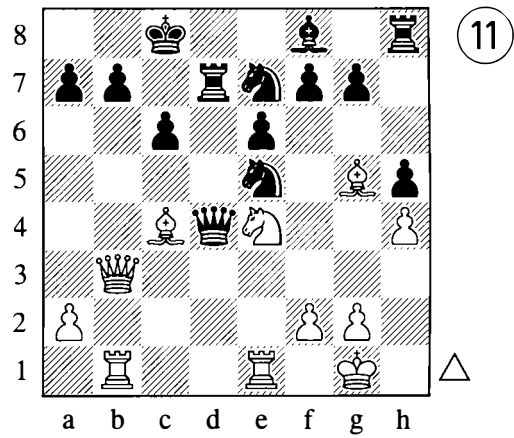
30.♖xf5? also fails to win directly, because of 30...♖e1† 31.♖f1 ♖e3†! 32.♕h1 ♖e6 and we have transposed to the position reached after move 34 in the game.

30.♖xb7?!± would of course have led to some advantage and been better than the game, but once you get confused, even second-best moves can easily elude you.

White could have eliminated the defence seen in the game by first playing **30.♖e7!**, when Black is immediately out of good options. **30...♖d2** There are lots of queen moves available, which all result in a check on d1, so I will give just the one. Objectively best is 30...♖c4, when after 31.♖xf5 Black can delay the brutality with 31...♖fd8. Here the easiest way to win is 32.h3, when Black is forced into 32...♖d4† 33.♖xd4 ♖xd4 34.♖xf7, which should be pretty hopeless. **31.♖xf5 ♖d1†** 31...h6 32.♖f3 does not improve things: 32...♕h7 33.♖f5†! ♕h8 34.♖e5† with mate. **32.♕f2** There are a few alternatives to the main line here, but it is both cool and simple, so I shall stick with it. **32...♖d2† 33.♕g3 ♖d3† 34.♕h4 ♖c4† 35.♕h5 h6 36.♕xh6** Black is mated.

7. Khairullin – Sutovsky, Aix-les-Bains 2011

We should not only pay attention to our opponent's ideas, but also to whether or not they actually work! **17.♖g5! ♙c2** This was clearly Sutovsky's idea. **18.♖xc2! ♙xc2† 19.♖xc2** Emil had no doubt worked out by this point that it had all gone pear-shaped. But what can he do? **19...♖e8 19...♖xf3 20.♙g2!** is the point Emil only noticed too late. **20.♙h4 ♕h8 21.♙f5 ♖f7 22.♙xg7 ♖xg7 23.♖xg7 ♕xg7 24.♖f5 a6 25.♙e4 ♙xe4 26.♖xe4 ♖g6 27.♙d3 ♖xe4 28.♙xe4 ♖f8 29.♕e2 ♖f7 30.h4 ♖f8 31.h5 ♖f7 32.h6† ♕f6 33.b4 1–0**

Hou Yifan – Dzagnidze, Rogaska Slatina 2011**Golod – Milicevic, Toronto 2011****Kapnis – Pavlidis, Chania 2011****Nepomniachtchi – Maletin, Olginka (rapid) 2011**

8. Hou Yifan – Dzagnidze, Rogaska Slatina 2011

White's plan of ♖h4 is obvious. Still Black did not manage to stop it in a convincing way. **21...♙c8?** This stops White from going to h4, but has other big drawbacks. **22.♜e4!** Attacking the weakness in the black position. **22.♜d5 ♖d8 23.♜de3!** was also very strong. White's attack is completely winning. **22...♖d8 22...♙xf5 23.♜xf6† ♜xf6 24.♙xf5** and White wins. **23.♜exd6 23.♜fxd6** also wins. **23...♙xf5 24.♜xf5 24.♜xe8 ♙xe8 25.♙xf5 ♙g7 26.♖f4** was probably a tad more accurate. **24...♙e6 24...♖d7** was the strongest defence, but White wins after: **25.♙af1 ♜d8** The only move. Now White has both **26.♜d4** and **26.♖h5!?** ♜h8 **27.♜g3! ♙g5 28.♜e4 ♖e7 29.♙f5 f6 30.h4.** White wins on account of **30...♙e3 31.♜xf6** and there is no defence to the simple ♜xh7. **25.♙h4 ♜g5 26.♙h5 ♖d2 27.♜e7† ♙xe7 28.♖xf6 ♜h7 29.♖f5** The end was played with computer-like precision. Very impressive. **1–0**

The correct idea for Black is pretty clear to all of my students, so I can only suppose that Dzagnidze was not thinking prophylactic thoughts during the game. After **21...♜h8!** Black is planning to play ...♙g8, when she will have ...♙xh4 as a simple resource against ♖h4. The main point is of course that she can do this with gain of tempo: **22.♙h4 ♙xg2†! 23.♜xg2 ♙g8† 24.♜h1 ♙xh4 25.♖xh4 ♜g4 26.♙f1 ♖c5** Black has a winning position.

9. Golod – Milicevic, Toronto 2011

White completely missed his opponent's counterplay and gave him a second chance. **17.♙c1? ♙a6! 18.b5 18.♙c2 ♙xe2† 19.♙xe2 ♙e8 20.b5** transposes. **18...♙xb5 19.♙c2 ♙xe2†!** Probably this is the resource that Golod missed. Without it Black is busted. **20.♙xe2 ♙e8 21.♙xb5 cxb5 21...♖xb5!?** **22.♜f1±** White won on move 43, but not because of his play up to this point.

17.♜d2! was the winning move. White is threatening to just take on h5 one way or another. Black does not have any way to avoid this. **17...♙e5 17...f6 18.♙xh5 gxh5 19.♖xf6 ♙e5 20.f4** and White wins. **17...♖f4† 18.e3 ♖xf3 19.♙xh5** and wins. **18.e4! ♖e6 19.♖xh5 f6 20.♙xe5** White has won a piece.

10. Kapnisis – Pavlidis, Chania 2011

The game ended in a Black victory after: **24.♙g2? ♙xg4** Black's counterplay consists of defending his king by bringing the bishop to h5, hitting the white queen in the process. **25.♙h1† ♙h5 26.♖c5 exf3 0–1**

White has only one way to counteract the above defence: **24.♙d3!! ♙xg4** Black cannot offer real resistance after **24...♖xf3 25.♙f1** or **24...♖h2 25.♖xf7† ♜h8 26.♙xe4. 25.♙h1† ♙h5** This is the moment White could have prepared for, anticipating that this was the only sensible way for Black to defend. Here White wins with: **26.♙xh5†! gxh5 27.♙xe4† ♖xe4 28.♖xf7†**

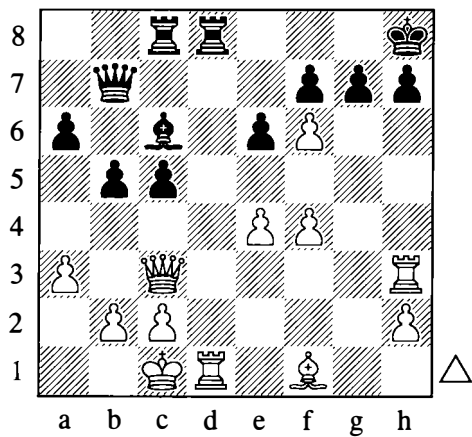
11. Nepomniachtchi – Maletin, Olginka (rapid) 2011

After **17.♙ed1??** Black promptly resigned, but he could have played on with confidence: **17...♖xe4 18.♙xd7 ♖xb1†!** Removing all threats and pointing out that White has invested a bit too much in his campaign. (18...b5!?∞ is also possible, but once you see the main move you don't need such complex stuff.) **19.♖xb1 ♜xd7** Black is better. How much is open for discussion, but it is a discussion he will enjoy having.

Instead the winning move was **17.♙a6!**, with the following idea: **17...♖b6** After **17...f6 18.♙xb7† ♜d8 19.♜xf6!** Black is murdered. **18.♙xb7† ♙xb7 18...♜xb7 19.♖c3** and White should win. **19.♜d6† ♜d7 20.♜xb7** With a close to winning advantage.

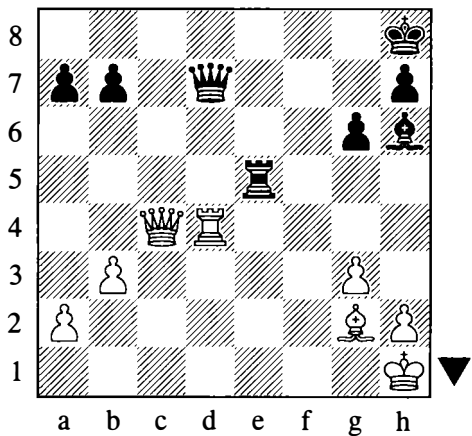
Navara – Babula, Czech Republic 2011

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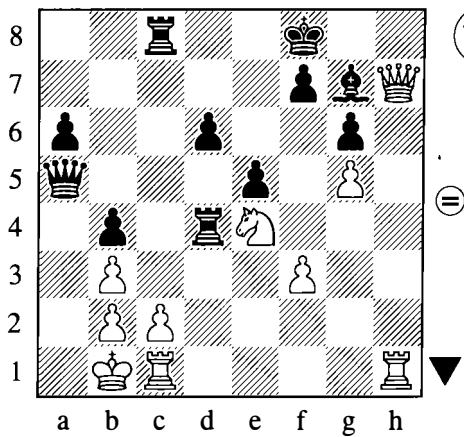
To. Pham – Bosch, Fagernes 2011

13



Melgosa – Gausel, Internet (blitz) 2004

14



12. Navara – Babula, Czech Republic 2011

22.fxg7†! This is quite a pragmatic move, but also a bit disappointing. With a pawn on f6 we want something bigger happening on the dark squares than just this. **22.♞d5? ♞xd5 23.♞xh7† ♣xh7 24.♞h3† ♣g8 25.♞g4** looks like a nice idea, but it does not work – Black wins after **25...♣f8**. It is reasonable to assume that Navara looked at **22.♞g3? ♞xd1† 23.♣xd1 gxf6 24.♞h4** but realized that this does not work, as Black has the simple **24...♞xe4** with an advantage. **22...♣g8 23.♞xd8† ♞xd8 24.♞f6 ♞d7?** This blunder allows White to win immediately. After **24...♞d6!** Black is worse, but the game is far from over: **25.♞e5 ♞d7 26.♞d3 c4 27.♞g5 f6! 28.♞xf6 ♞xg7 29.♞xe6† ♣h8 30.♞h6 ♞b8!** with an advantage for White in this complicated position. **25.f5! exf5 26.♞h6 1–0**

The winning line involves first making sure a rook is hanging on d8. **22.♞xd8†! ♞xd8** Only now should White play: **23.♞g3!** White also has a win with **23.♞e5!? ♞xe4 24.♞g5 ♞g8**, because of **25.♞g2!! ♞d5 26.♞xh7† ♣xh7 27.♞xe4† ♞xe4 28.♞h5#**. **23...gxf6 23...g6 24.♞xh7†** is mating quite easily. **24.♞h4** The threat of **♞xf6†** forces Black's hand. **24...♣g8 25.♞xf6 ♞d7 25...♞d7 26.♞d3** is also hopeless. **26.♞g5† ♣f8 27.♞xh7** White wins.

13. To. Pham – Bosch, Fagernes 2011

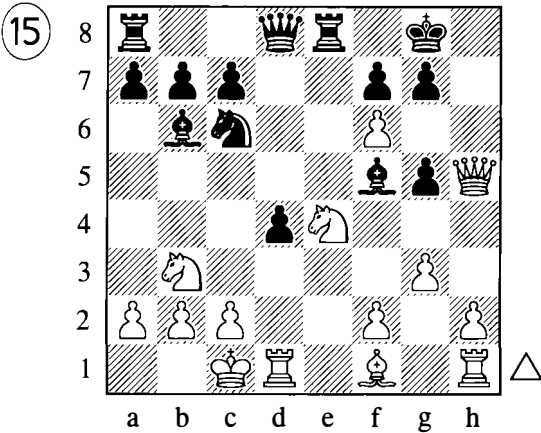
Black has an obvious continuation available. **33...♞e1† 34.♞f1 ♞xf1† 34...♞e8 35.♣g2** is not a problem for White. But the main issue here is that White has a little trick. **35.♣g2!** Black's queen is of course hanging. **35...♞g1†!** This is the obvious reply, but White has a subtlety. **36.♣f2!** White naturally does not take the rook, but persists in attacking it, bringing to mind the saying that “the threat is stronger than the execution”. Black can of course return the bishop with **36...♞e3†**, but there would be no advantage after this. However, Black has a stronger move: **36...♞f5†!! 37.♣xg1 ♞e3† 38.♣g2 ♞f2†** White resigned, in view of **39.♣h3 ♞xd4**. **0–1**

14. Melgosa – Gausel, Internet (blitz) 2004

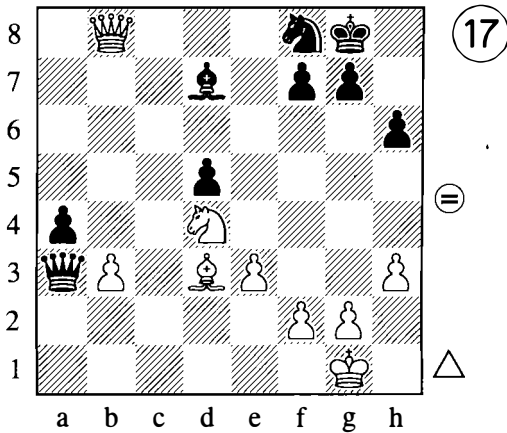
I like to look for exercises in blitz games, even though pointing out mistakes in these is not really fair. However, good players get into crazy positions and a lot of interesting opportunities occur, even if the players have little chance of finding the correct answers. **28...♞xe4?** This shows how hopeless Black felt his situation was. He just gives up trying to find a good move here. One of the explanations for Black's desperation can be seen after **28...d5?**, when White wins with **29.♣f6 ♞xf6 30.gxf6 ♣e8 31.♞g8†**. A very simple line, but not so easy to avoid. Black cannot prevent the knight to coming f6. For example, White wins after **28...♞d8? 29.♣f6! ♞xf6 30.gxf6 ♞xf6 31.♞h8†** and the rook is lost. **29.fxe4+– ♞d8 30.♞hg1 d5 31.♞cf1 ♞d6 32.♞xf7† ♣xf7 33.♞f1† ♞f6 34.♞xf6† 1–0**

The solution is to defend f7 in a way that allows **...♣e8-d7** if required. The correct move is therefore **28...♞d5!!**, when **29.♣f6?! ♞xf6 30.gxf6 ♣e8** would even favour Black, who is in control. White might do better to play **29.♞cg1**, when after **29...♞c7 30.♣f6 ♞xf6 31.gxf6 ♣e8 32.♞xg6 ♣d7** the position is quite unclear.

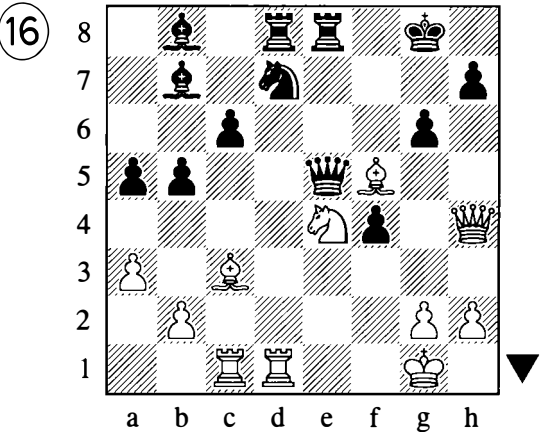
Negi – Adhiban, Bad Wiessee 2011



Pavlovic – Rublevsky, Valjevo 2011



Wojtaszek – Pashikian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011



15. Negi – Adhiban, Bad Wiessee 2011

16.h4!! 16.♖xg5 ♕g6 17.♙d3 ♜e5± was nothing special. **16...♙xe4** Resigning himself to his fate, but there was nothing else. Black had surely planned to throw in 16...♙g6 to chase the queen away. We need to see such options, and in this case also to see that it does not work, meaning we can ignore it. White wins after 17.♖xg6! fxg6 18.♙c4† ♖f8 19.hxg5 gxf6 20.gxf6 and Black has to give up so much material to avoid being mated that it does not make any sense to play on. 17.hxg5 ♙xh1 18.♙d3 White just wins. 18...gxf6 19.♙xh1 ♖f8 20.♖h6† ♖e7 21.♖xf6† ♖d7 22.♙f5† ♜e6 23.♖xf7† ♖e7 24.♙xe6† ♖d6 25.♖f4† ♖e5 26.♙h6 ♜f8 27.♙f5† ♖d5 28.♖e4† ♖c4 29.♙e6† ♖b4 30.♖xe5 1–0

16. Wojtaszek – Pashikian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

26...♖e7?? With this horrific blunder, Black drops a piece in his attempt to avoid a line which he believed was drawn. 27.♖xe7 ♜xe7 28.♙xd7 ♙a7† 29.♖f1? 29.♖h1 would just win. The explanation comes in the note to the next move. **29...♙xe4!?** Here Black could have employed a freak defence with 29...♖f8!. The point is that after 30.♖f6 b4! Black is threatening ...♙a6 with mate. Play now takes on a forced nature: 31.♙d4 ♙xd4 32.♜xd4 ♖g7 33.♙d6 ♙a6† 34.♖f2 ♜e2† 35.♖f3 ♜xb2 36.axb4 axb4 37.♜e1 ♜f8 38.♜e7† ♜f7 39.♜xf7† ♖xf7 40.♙xc6 ♙f1 White has winning chances, but they are greatly reduced as he will be down to only one pawn. **30.♙e6†!** ♜xe6 31.♙xd8† ♖f7 32.♙h8 ♙e3 33.♙d1 ♜e7 34.♙dd8 ♖e6 35.♙hf8 ♜c7 36.♙xa5 ♜e7 37.♙c3 ♜c7 38.♙f6† ♖e7 39.♙h8 1–0

However, the “drawing” line that Black avoided can even be improved, leading directly to a winning position. After **26...♖xf5** 27.♙xd7, which was clearly White’s intention, Black has the intermediate move **27...♙a7†!**, the idea behind which will soon be clear. 27...♙xd7 28.♖f6† ♖f8 actually leads to a complicated equality, but since Black can convincingly improve on it, we do not need to know all the details. 28.♖h1 ♙xd7 29.♖f6† ♖f8 30.♖h6† ♖e7 31.♜e1† ♙e3! The idea of Black’s earlier check. 32.♖xh7† ♖d8 33.♙xa5† ♖c8 Black wins.

17. Pavlovic – Rublevsky, Valjevo 2011

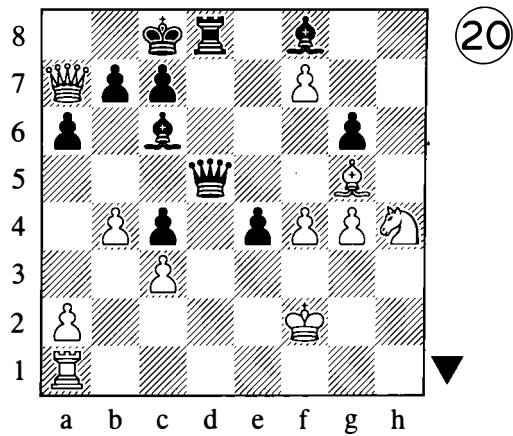
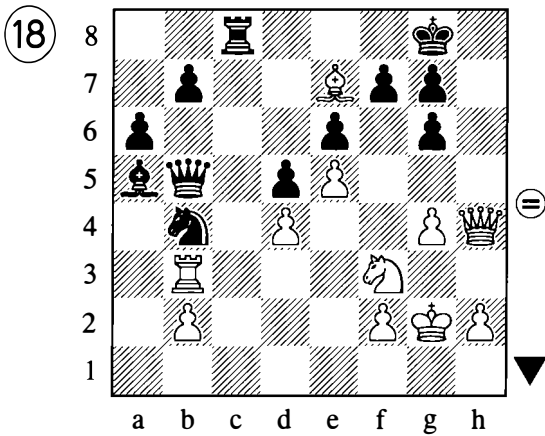
White lost instantly in the game after **34.♙f1?** ♖b2! 0–1.

Nor does **34.♖a7?!** solve all his problems. After 34...♖c1† 35.♖h2 a3! 36.♖c2 ♖d2! White is struggling. The forcing line goes 37.♖d4 ♖a5 38.b4 ♖a8 with an advantage for Black. His passed pawn is the more dangerous.

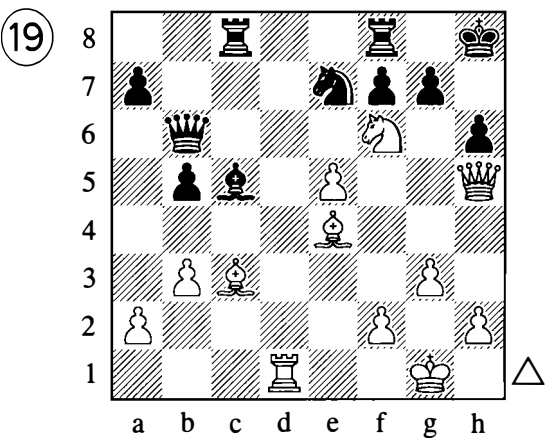
White should play: **34.♖h2!!** ♖b2 At first my computer finds White’s position hopeless, but actually there are two ways to play, both of them incredible. 34...axb3 is not dangerous, of course. **35.♙b5!** Sabino Brunello found an additional way to draw. He called it an unhappy choice, but I see no reason for his misery: 35.♙h7†! ♖xh7 Fritz 13 gives Black a 3.65 advantage. But soon it understands what the Italian genius has prepared for it! 36.♖xf8 a3 –6.70 (36...♖xf2 37.bxa4 and White draws: 37...♙xa4 38.♖a8!) 37.♖xf7! Oops. 0.00. The human triumphs. (I am tempted to say “again”, but this does not really happen often enough for me to do so.) 37...a2 38.♖xd7 ♖b1 (38...a1=♖ 39.♖f5† is just a perpetual) 39.♖e6 a1=♖ 40.♖f8† ♖g8 41.♖e8! Miraculously White draws here. **35...a3** The amusing thing is that for Sabino to find the astonishing draw above, he first rejected 35.♙b5, having missed that 35...♙xb5? 36.bxa4! would simply win for White! 35...♖xf2 36.♙xd7 a3 transposes. **36.♙xd7 ♖xf2!** The best move. 36...a2?! 37.♖e6! is an important point. White is better after 37...fxe6 38.♙xe6† ♖h7 39.♖xf8 ♖e5† 40.g3 ♖xe6 41.♖a3 d4 42.♖xa2 d3 43.♖b1 ♖g6 44.♖d1, but it will not be easy to win. **37.♙e8 a2** 38.♖a7 ♖h8 39.♙xf7 ♖xe3 40.♖xa2 ♖xd4 With a draw.

Vachier-Lagrave – Wang Hao, Wijk aan Zee 2011

Majdan – Zawadzka, Warsaw 2011



Dzagnidze – Skripchenko, Antakya 2010



18. Vachier-Lagrave – Wang Hao, Wijk aan Zee 2011

White is ready to play $\text{d}5$ with unavoidable mate. However, Wang Hao has a surprising way to avoid that. **32...d3!! 33.xb5!** The only way forward. **33.d5?** no longer works. After **33...f4+** **34.g3** $\text{xb}3+$ **35.f4** Black has only one move – luckily it is mate in one! **35...d2#**. The real trap is that after **33.fxd3?** Black has **33...g5!!**, which Vachier-Lagrave had surely missed prior to the knight landing on d3. The disappointment must have been immense. **34.dg5** $\text{xd}3+$ **33...f4+** **34.g3** **34.h1** $\text{c}1+$ **35.dg1** is of course possible, but White has no chance of fighting for an advantage after: **35...e2** **36.h3** (**36.g2** $\text{fxg}1+$ **37.f3** $\text{xd}4+$ **38.e3** $\text{dxb}5$ gives about even chances) **36...fxg1+** **37.h2** $\text{axb}5$ **38.g5** $\text{b}1$ With equal chances (and a likely perpetual on d8 and h4 at some point). **34...e2+** **35.h3** $\text{d}f4+$ **36.g3** $\text{d}e2+$ **37.g2** $\text{d}f4+$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

19. Dzagnidze – Skripchenko, Antakya 2010

In the game White went astray with **24.d7?** $\text{xf}2+$ **25.f1** $\text{we}3!$ and was already somewhat worse. **26.dxf8?!** (**26.g4** $\text{wc}3$ **27.dxf8** $\text{xf}8$ **28.fxf2** $\text{we}5+$ was the lesser evil) **26...we4** **27.wxf7?** (**27.fxf2** $\text{wxc}3$ **28.we2** $\text{c}2$ **29.fxd2** would allow White to struggle on a bit, but the endgame is awful.) **27...b6** **28.we7** $\text{wf}3+$ **29.e1** $\text{wf}2\#$. White can do better with **24.f2!!?** $\text{d}g8$ **25.d7** $\text{xf}2+$ **26.g2** $\text{wd}4$ **27.f5** and White has some advantage. For example: **27...e3** **28.c1** $\text{wc}3$ **29.dxf8** $\text{xf}8$ **30.wf3** $\text{d}d4$ **31.wxc3** $\text{fx}c3$ **32.fxd7+**

However, best of all is: **24.f2!!** $\text{xf}2$ After **24...fcd8** (or the other rook for that matter) **25.d7** White regains the exchange and keeps her extra pawn. The position is just winning. One of the main points is that **25...wc7?** **26.e6** wins rather quickly: **26...f6** **27.dxf8** $\text{xf}8$ **28.fxd7** $\text{wb}6$ **29.fxe7** $\text{fxe}7$ **30.wg6** with mate in a few moves. **25.fxd6** **25.b4** $\text{c}5$ **26.d7** also wins. **25...wxc3** After **25...we3?!** **26.f2** Black will be mated. **26.fxb6** $\text{fxb}6$ **27.d7** White wins on account of **27...fxd8** **28.wxf7** $\text{fxd}7$ **29.we8+** $\text{d}g8$ **30.wg6** and mate is near.

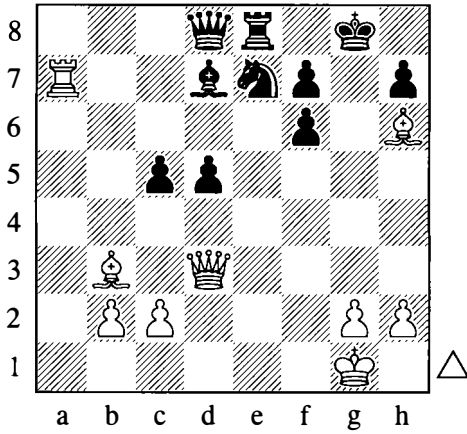
20. Majdan – Zawadzka, Warsaw 2011

35...f5? **36.wxc5** $\text{wd}2+$ **37.fg1** $\text{e}3$ has been suggested to me a few times as winning, but actually it is far from it. **38.wxc6?!** $\text{bxc}6$ **39.fxd8** is enough to secure a draw (there will be $\text{d}f5!$ at the right moment). And White has something even stronger in **38.f1!** $\text{e}2$ **39.fxd8** $\text{exf}1=\text{w}+$ **40.fxf1** $\text{wc}1+$ **41.f2** $\text{wxf}4+$ **42.f2** $\text{w}g4+$ **43.f2** $\text{wf}4+$ **44.wc3** $\text{wxf}7$ **45.fg5** and White is likely to convert her advantage.

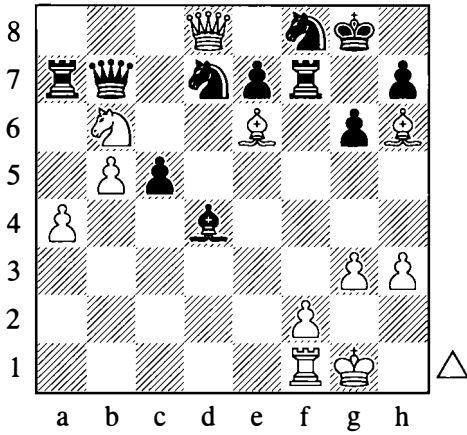
Before going for the attack, Black cuts the white queen out of the game: **35...b6!** Also **35...wd2+** **36.fg1** $\text{b}6!$ **37.fxd8** $\text{b}7!!$ works in much the same way. **36.fxd8** $\text{b}7!!$ I still find this idea absolutely remarkable, but Black actually had a clearer win with **36...fxd8!** **37.wxa6+** $\text{b}8$, when the white queen remains out of play and Black wins after **38.wxc4** $\text{w}h4+$ **39.f3** $\text{wg}3+$ **40.f2** $\text{wf}2+$ **41.f1** $\text{e}3$ **42.wxc6** $\text{wd}2+$ **43.f1** $\text{e}2$. **37.f1?!** Black also wins after the better defence: **37.fg6** $\text{wd}2+$ **38.fg3** $\text{wxc}3+$ **39.f4** $\text{w}a1!$ **40.f7!** (**40.dxf8** $\text{w}h8+$ **41.fg3** $\text{wxf}8$ and Black wins elementarily) **40...w1+ **41.f5** $\text{f}h6+$ **42.f6** $\text{e}3!$ **43.f6!?** (**43.g5** $\text{wc}6+$ with a direct win. Black gets $\text{f}g7$ in next.) **43...e2** **44.g5** $\text{cxd}6$ **45.gxh6** $\text{w}h6$ **46.f8** $\text{w}+$ $\text{wxf}8+$ **47.dxf8** $\text{e}1=\text{w}$ **48.fxb6** $\text{w}h4+$ **49.f6** $\text{c}3$ And Black wins eventually. **37...fxd8** **38.fg6** $\text{wd}3!$ Now Black just wins. **39.dxf8** $\text{wxc}3+$ **40.f2** $\text{wf}3+$ **41.f2** $\text{wxf}4+$ **42.f2** $\text{wf}2+$ **43.f3** $\text{wc}3$ $\text{wc}3+$ **44.f2** $\text{wd}3+$ **45.f2** $\text{wd}2+$ **0-1****

Svidler – Caruana, Amsterdam 2010

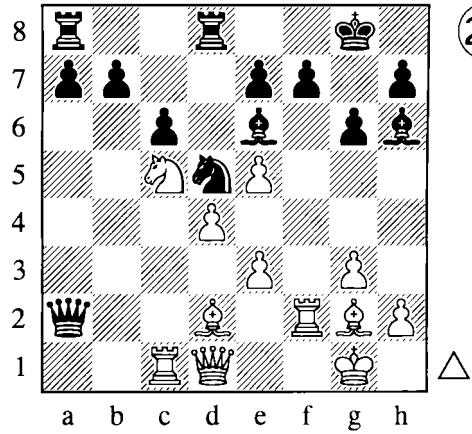
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**Erdos – Mamedyarov**, Gibraltar 2012

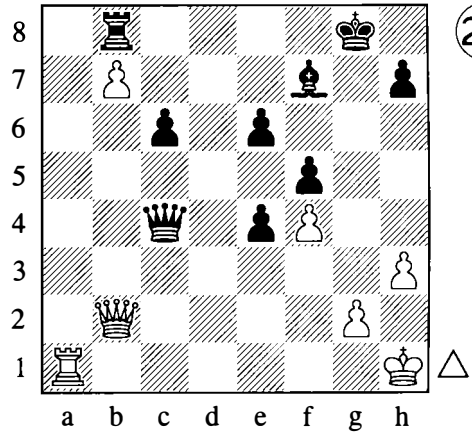
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**Williams – Marcelin**, Mulhouse 2011

(23)

**Adams – Ivanchuk**, Porto Carras 2011

(24)



21. Svidler – Caruana, Amsterdam 2010

Svidler played too fast because he wanted to catch a movie with his wife and children. Had he been fully focused he would not have made a mess of things here. 24.♔a4? ♔xa4 25.♖xe7 This combination looks absolutely winning, but Black has a fine counterblow. 25...♖xc2! Svidler had missed this. Now he has to be a bit careful in order to save the draw. 26.♖xe8† ♖xe8 27.♖g3† ♔g6 28.h4 ♖e5 29.♖g4 f5 30.♖a4 f6 31.♖a8† ♔e8 32.h5 f4 33.♖b7 f5 34.b4 c4 35.b5 c3 36.♖c8 f3 36...c2 37.♖xc2 ♖e6 38.♖c5! ♖xh6 39.♖xd5† ♔g7 40.♖e5† ♔f7 41.♖xf5† and White will eventually make the draw after all. 37.♖c5 ♖e1† 38.♔h2 ♖h4† 39.♔g1 ♖e1† 40.♔h2 ♖h4† 41.♔g1 ♖e1† ½–½

The winning line was rather nice: 24.♔xd5! ♔f5 24...♔g4 is easily refuted, for example by 25.♔xf7† ♔xf7 26.♖xh7† ♔e6 27.♖e4† with a simple win. 25.♖g3†! 25.♔xf7† secures some advantage, but probably not enough to win. And 25.♖xe7? ♖xe7 26.♖xf5 looks tempting too, but Black wins with 26...♖e1† 27.♖f1 ♖h4! with a strong triple threat. 25...♔g6 26.♔xf7†! Pretty, but not the only way. 26.♖a8 gives a pleasant position after the forced 26...♔c8, as White would win instantly after 26...♖d7? 27.♖d6!. 26...♔xf7 27.♖b3† Black is mated.

22. Erdos – Mamedyarov, Gibraltar 2012

The game continued: 30.♔xd7? ♖a8! 31.♖b6 ♖f3! 32.♔xf7† ♔xf7 33.♖c6 33.♔e5† ♔xe5 34.♖xc5 ♖e4–+; 33.♖c7 ♔xd7 34.♖xd7 ♖xg3† 35.♔h1 ♖f3† 36.♔g1 ♖xa4 37.♔e3 ♖b4–+ 33...♖xg3† 34.♔h1 ♖xh3† 35.♔g1 ♖xa4! 36.♔xf8 36.♔xf8 loses to all black bishop moves along the a1-h8 diagonal that do not allow knight takes bishop, e.g. 36...♔g7–+ 36...♖xh6 37.♖f3† ♔f6 38.♖b3† c4! The beautiful point of Black's play. 39.♖xa4 ♖g5† 40.♔h1 ♖h4† 41.♔g1 ♖g4† 42.♔h2 ♔e5† 43.f4 ♔xf4† 44.♖xf4† ♖xf4† 45.♔g2 ♖d2† 46.♔h3 ♖c3† 47.♔g2 ♔xf8 and Black won on move 78.

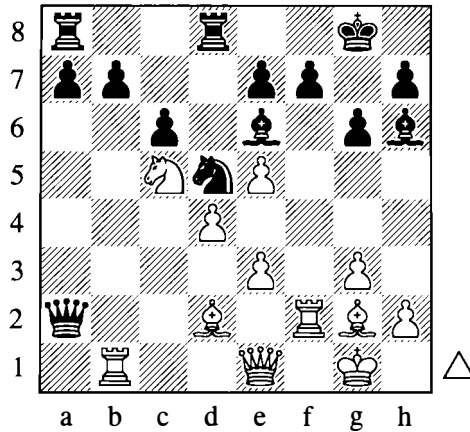
White should play: 30.♖e8! Erdos also missed this on the previous move, where Black would just have had to resign. Here things are less obvious, but White comes out on top all the same. 30...♖f3 31.♔h2!! White has enough time to sidestep the threats of ...♔xf2† and ...♖xg3†, and the simple 32.♔xd7 is now White's threat. 31.♔f4? would remove the pressure on f8 and give Black the better chances after 31...♔e5!. 31...♔xf2 The only move. 31...♔e5 32.♔f4! is an important point. White wins after 32...♔h8 33.♖xf7 ♔xe6 34.♔xd7 ♔xf4 35.gxf4 ♖xd7 36.♖e8† ♔g7 37.♖xd7 ♖xf4† 38.♔g1 ♖g5† 39.♔h1 and Black is out of checks. 32.♖xf7† ♖xf7 33.♔xf7† ♔xf7 34.♖xf2† ♔e8 35.♔xd7 ♔xd7 36.♖a2 ♖b7 37.♔g2 The ending is winning for White. He will use the advantages of better pawns, bishop against knight, more active pieces and a better king to squeeze all life out of his opponent. Lines are not really relevant here, although moves could be listed of course.

23. Williams – Marcelin, Mulhouse 2011

In the game, after 20.♖a1? ♖b2 21.♔a4, both 21...♔xe3 as played, and 21...♖b5!? give Black a decent game. White eventually won on move 41, but there was no predicting this at the halfway mark. 20.♔h1? b6 21.♔xe6 fxe6 22.e4 (with the idea 23.♔e3!) fails to 22...♔c3!! 23.♖xc3 ♖xd4 24.♖c2 ♖a5! 25.h3 ♖xe5 and Black has enough compensation for the piece.

The winning move is: 20.♖e1!! The double threat is e3–e4 (followed by ♖xd2), as well as ♔b4 if the knight retreats. These ideas are combined in the case of 20...♔g7. 20...♖a3! The only chance to make White's task difficult. 20...♔c7 21.♔b4! traps the queen, while 20...a5 21.e4 just wins a piece. 21.♖a1 ♖b2 22.♖b1 ♖a2 22...♖a3 23.♔xd5! ♔xd5 24.♔c1 traps the queen.

This position provides a further exercise in prophylaxis.



23.♔h1! An important trick to notice is 23.e4? ♘e3!! 24.♖a1 ♘xg2! 25.♔xg2 ♕xd2 26.♖xd2 ♖c4 and White cannot capture the black queen. **23...b6 24.♘e6 fxe6 25.e4 ♕xd2 26.♖xd2 ♖a4 27.exd5 cxd5 28.♕f1+–**

24. Adams – Ivanchuk, Porto Carras 2011

The game continuation is not bad, but it is not the most convincing. I was there watching the game live and should say that Adams did not have a lot of time left, just a few minutes, while Ivanchuk had plenty. However, Ivanchuk was playing quickly and did not seriously try to find a defence, which no doubt influenced the level of concentration Mickey was able to display as well. Chess is after all a practical game – we need to make many good decisions in a short space of time. In training we can refine the tools needed to do so, but when we are playing we have to cut corners more often than we (and especially the engines) would like. **34.♖e5!! ♖xb7 35.♖a8! ♕e8 36.♖xe8 ♔f7 37.♖h8 ♖b5 38.♖d6!** Not the strongest according to the engine. However, 38.♖xh7? ♔g6 39.♖xb7 ♖xb7 40.♖xe6 ♔g7 41.♖xf5 ♖b4 would give Black counterplay with the e-pawn. **38...♖b2!** The best defence. In the game Ivanchuk went down quickly – in time as well as number of moves, as he did not hesitate with his “defence” – after 38...♖b4? 39.♖d8! ♖b2 40.♖f8 ♔g7 41.♖g8 ♔1–0. **39.♖f8 ♔g7 39.♖xh7 ♔g6** is again not clear. **39...♔g6 40.♖e8 ♔f6 41.♖d8 ♖e7 42.♖f8 ♔g6** Had the game taken this direction, Adams would surely have found the winning move here. **43.♔h2!! ♖b7 44.♖g8 ♔f6 45.♖d4 ♔e5 46.fxe5 ♔f7 47.♖c4 ♖e6 48.♖h8 ♔g7 49.♖xh7 ♔xh7 50.♖xe6** White should win this endgame, as he now has a passed pawn of his own. Still it would take some work: **50...c5 51.♖xf5 ♔g8 52.h4 c4 53.e6 ♖c7 54.♔h3 c3 55.♖g6 ♖g7 56.♖xe4 ♖e7 57.h5** and the smoke has not fully cleared, but White wins all the same.

A weaker option for White is **34.♖b6? e3 35.♖c7 ♖xb7! 36.♖xb7 ♖xf4**, which would allow Black to escape with a draw. If White threatens anything, Black gives a perpetual.

The correct choice is: **34.♔h2!!** This prophylactic move is essential, now or later. We saw it played later in the above line, but it is even better to play it now. Black loses the chance to play ...♖f1 ♔gaining a tempo at an important point. **34...e3** Other moves do not save Black either: 34...♖d5 35.♖a8 ♖d8 36.♖a1 and 37.♖a7, winning. 34...♕e8 35.♖a8 e3 36.♖e5

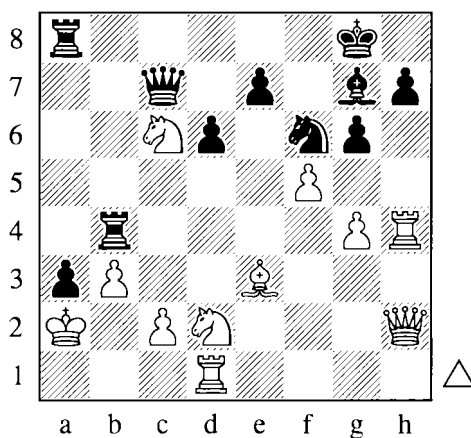
simply transposes. 35.♖e5 ♜xb7 36.♞a8† ♔e8 37.♞xe8† ♕f7 38.♞h8 ♜b4! The toughest defence. 38...♜b5 39.♜d4 ♜b2 40.♜d8 and White wins. Compared to the game Black is lacking his counterplay. 39.♞xh7† ♕g6 40.♞h8 ♕f7 Otherwise ♞g8† kills. 41.♜xe3 White is simply winning here. The equal material is far less important than the endangered black king. 41...c5 41...♜b2 42.♞h7† ♕f8 43.♜c5† ♕g8 44.♞h6 and White wins. Best play is apparently 44...♞h7 45.♞xe6 ♞f7 46.♞g6† ♕h8 47.♜xc6. I guess the picture is quite clear here. 42.♜g3 ♕e7 43.♜g7† ♕d6 44.♜e5† ♕c6 45.♜xe6† ♕b5 46.♜xf5 White wins.

Chapter 4

Comparison

Herman Ottevaere – Karel Falleyn

Correspondence 1973



White to play

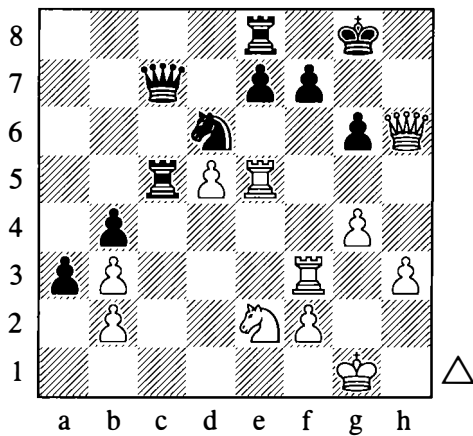
The knight on c6 is hanging and taking the rook with 30.♖xb4? is refuted immediately by the beautiful 30...♘d5!!. And taking the pawn first with 30.♙xh7?! is met with 30...♗xg4!, which is quite simply a mess. 30.c4!? is not a bad move, but also not totally clear.

What White needs to do is to protect the c6-knight with the queen, but is this best done from g2 or h1?

The method of comparison is very useful for the practical player. Let's assume that you can have the same position except with the pawn on either a2 or b2; and that there are a lot of variations to calculate. In such a scenario it is a great help to be able to think in concepts, trying to make out what the differences will be between the two different variations. We will be able to calculate a lot of tactics and then be able to put in our take on them.

Paul Keres – Donald Byrne

San Antonio 1972



White has attacking chances on the kingside with the idea Qxf7 , but it has to be prepared. This can be done with both Nd4 and Bg5 , moves that in different ways seek to follow up with mate after the rook sacrifice.

But there is the a-pawn to take into consideration. If we prepare our attack it will certainly queen – and with check.

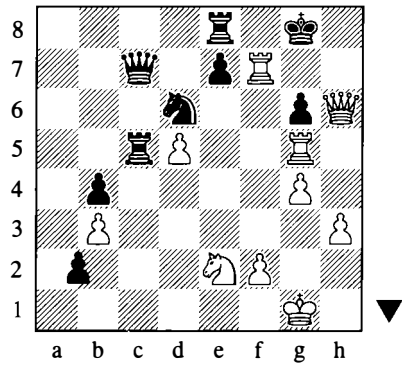
As this is a simple position we can actually work out with brute-force calculation which move is better, but I doubt that anyone can understand the position fully without conceptually seeing it as promotion on either a1 or b1. Basically there are three scenarios with the passed pawn.

a) White exchanges on a3 and Black promotes with check on a1.

b1) White does not exchange on a3 and Black promotes with check on a1, but the b2-pawn stays.

b2) White does not exchange on a3 and Black promotes with check on b1 after taking the b2-pawn.

The idea is that this position can easily be solved by looking at this position in our mind's eye:

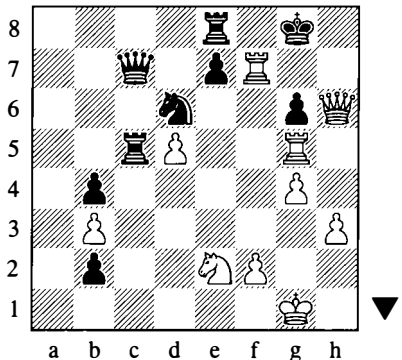


We can then imagine any of the three scenarios and decide how it will work out. And who knows, maybe this is exactly what Keres did!

30.bxa3!

The alternatives would fail miserably. White's attack is taking place on the light squares and the control over g6 is very important.

30. Bg5 ? is best answered with 30... axb2! , when 31. Qxf7 ?



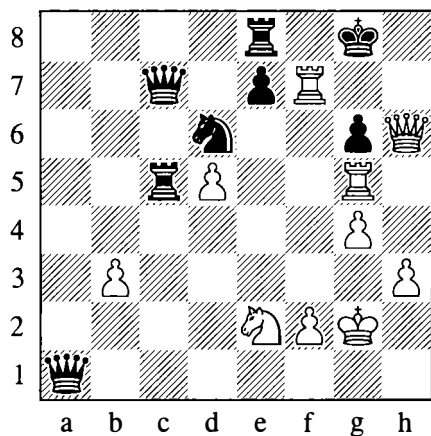
would even lose after 31...b1=♚†. The new queen conveniently defends g6.

30.♘d4? axb2 also does not bring any luck. Taking on f7 is just as useless as in the previous line, so again White needs to bail out with a draw after 31.♘e6.

30...bxa3 31.♞g5!

White also wins after 31.♘d4!, based on 31...a2 32.♞xf7 ♜xf7 33.♞h7† with mate in three moves.

31...a2 32.♞xf7! a1=♚† 33.♜g2



Mate is near so Black resigned.

1–0

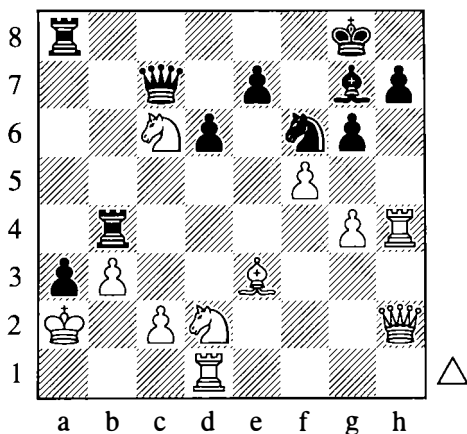
In principle there is nothing more to the technique than this. In positions where the variations tend to go in one specific direction after two different moves, you do not have to analyse them both extensively and get lost in the variations. It is a bit like laying out the furniture in your new living room. You might know where the shelves, the TV, the stereo and the shrine worshipping Kirsan Ilyumzhinov go. But you cannot work out where the photo of your wife's family will fit best – behind the sofa or on top of the shelves. In this case, you lay everything out and then try out the

different options. You do not start over every time, you just move around the last few items to see how it all lines up. The same is the case with the method of comparison.

With this explained in all its simplicity, let's immediately move on to very complicated examples!

Herman Ottevaere – Karel Falleyn

Correspondence 1973



30.♞g2?!

This game was played in the glory days of correspondence chess when it was possible to completely miss your opponent's next move. I have a feeling this happened a few times to White, but it is certainly possible to solve this position using both conceptual thinking and straight calculation.

As we shall see below, the correct move was 30.♞h1!! after which White is completely winning.

30...d5!

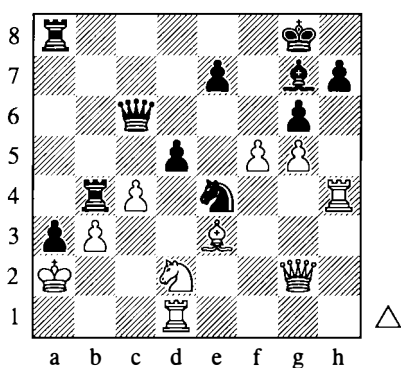
This was obviously Black's idea.

30...♞c8?! 31.♘xb4 ♞c3 is weaker. The rook is better on a8 and the pawn is useful on d5.

32.♖b1 (32.♘c4 ♜xc4 33.♘d3 also wins)
32...♜xb4 33.c4 and White wins.

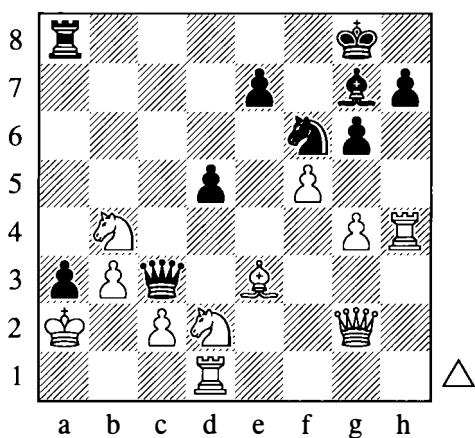
31.♘xb4

31.c4? ♜xc6 32.g5 does not work. Black is much better after 32...♘e4!.



With the idea 33.♘e4 ♜xb3!! with a mating attack.

31...♜c3

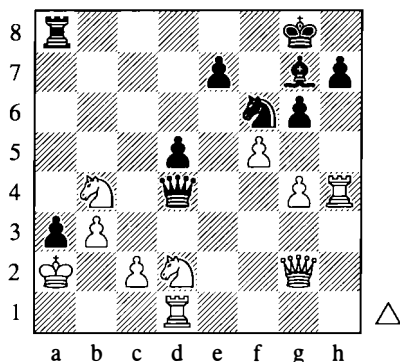


32.♘c4??

It would be easy to dismiss this move as a tactical mistake, overlooking Black's combination. This would not take into account the great transformation of chess thinking that has happened in the last twenty years with the rise and rise of the chess engines.

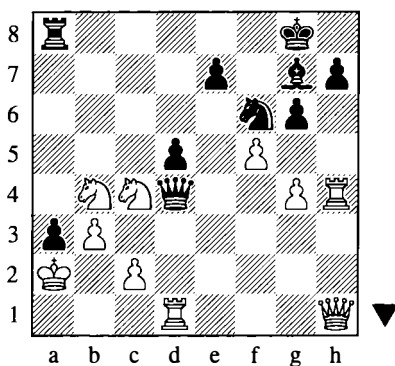
Today people would be looking for a so-called 'computer move' to try to save the game; and in this case they would find it:

32.♘d4!! ♜xd4

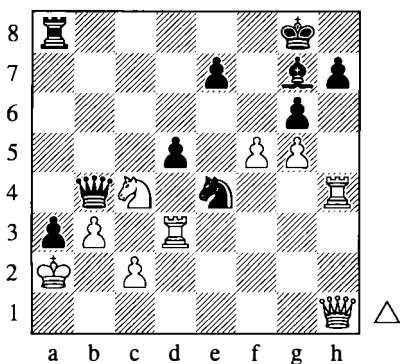


Now 33.♘c4? would hang the rook on d1 and lose quite quickly.

But if White had played 30.♜h1!! (instead of 30.♜g2?!), play would most likely have been more or less identical (with the queen's placement being the only difference) so the rook on d1 would be defended and the game would end quickly after 33.♘c4!:



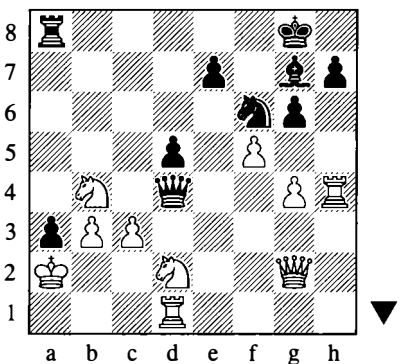
33...♜c3 34.♘d3 ♜xb4 35.g5 with extra material and a winning attack both on the kingside and in the centre. (White could also take on h7 on the previous move or on d5 here. The choices are many.) A possible end could arise after 35...♘e4:



36. Rxe4! dx4 37. Wxe4 Ba6 (37... Re8 38. We6†
 ♖h8 39. fxg6 with a mating attack; ♜d3-h3 is
 on its way.) 38. f6! exf6 39. ♞d8† ♙f8 40. ♞d5†
 ♖g7 41. ♞d7† ♖h8 42. ♞f7 with mate.

But White did not play this, so we have to
 put the queen back on the inferior g2-square.
 White's options are limited. In this position he
 should play:

33. c3!



This would allow White to stay in the game;
 and even play for an advantage.

33... Wxc3 34. ♘c4 ♞b8

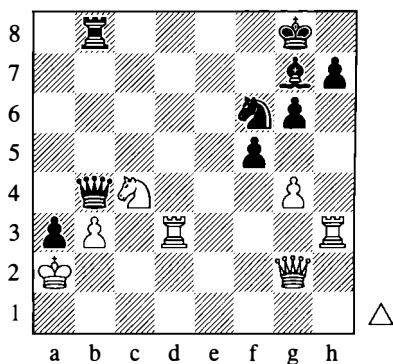
34... Wxb4 35. ♞xd5 also favours White, but
 is not entirely clear.

35. ♞h3! ♞xb4 36. ♞xd5 e6!

The only move.

36... gxf5 37. gxf5 h5 38. ♞dd3 and ♞dg3
 wins.

37. ♞dd3 exf5



38. gxf5±

White has a strong advantage and should
 probably win, but a lot of tricks still exist.

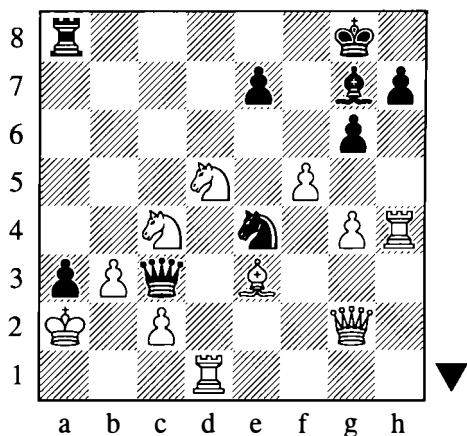
32... ♘e4!

Black is winning, as no doubt both players
 believed all along.

33. ♘xd5

The mate arising after 33. ♘d4 ♙xd4 34. ♞xd4
 dxc4 is a bit more prosaic, but 33. fxg6 would
 have allowed a very pretty finish in: 33... ♞a1†!
 34. ♞xa1 ♘c3#

White has an extra knight, rook and queen,
 but little does it help him!



33... ♞b2†!

White resigned.

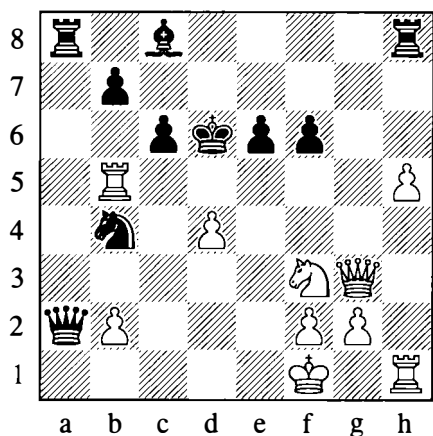
0-1

To sum up – the queen is better placed on h1, from where it is both attacking h7 and, far more importantly, defending the rook on d1. Some people would be able to solve this by pure calculation, while others would find it easier to solve this by thinking in general concepts. Obviously there are drawbacks to both forms of thinking, but combined they can be quite powerful.

The logic in the next example is really beautiful.

Tigran Petrosian – Bojan Kurajica

European Club Cup, Plovdiv 2010



Obviously this is not the former World Champion in action nor is it his ghost, though I am not entirely sure you cannot call the young Armenian grandmaster a tribute act. With no knowledge thereof, I am imagining that he was named Tigran by a chess enthusiast father, maybe after lengthy negotiations with the mother. But make no mistake; there is no restraint and python-like suffocation in his play. Although I cannot say I have seen all of his games, I would presume he has brutally mated more people than you have had pies. Unlike the former bearer of his name, the young Tigran is indeed a tiger at the chessboard.

I think the diagram position gives this away as well.

Before we get into the discussion of the inner workings of the position, let's quickly get the game out of the way...

25...e5??

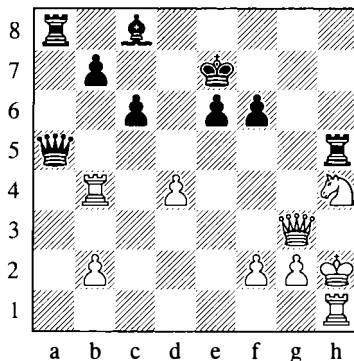
A horrific move that loses instantly. Probably Kurajica played this with a loose hand in the way you would when you have resigned the game but continue to make moves, certain of your defeat. But as we shall see, this move is the only losing move in the position!

26.dxe5† fxe5 27.♖xe5† ♔d7 28.♖xb4 c5
29.♖xc5 ♖a6† 30.♔g1 ♖d6 31.♜e5† ♜e6
32.♖xd6† ♜xd6 33.♜f7† ♜c5 34.♞hh4
1–0

Had this been the chapter on elimination we could have talked about how easily 25...e5 could be removed from the list of candidates. But we would have struggled a lot to eliminate the two remaining options. Here the method of comparison works best.

The main line runs sort of like this:

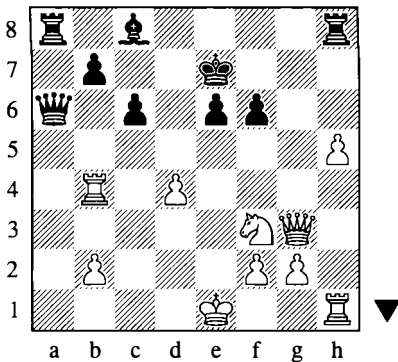
25...♜d/e7 26.♖xb4 ♖a6† 27.♔g1 ♖a1†
28.♜h2 ♖xh5† 29.♜h4 ♖a5!!



Black is ready to both take the rook on b4 and play ...♖g5!. White has nothing better

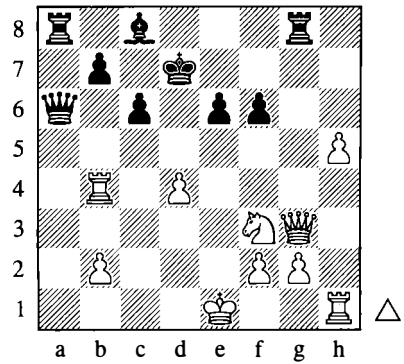
than to attempt to bail out with a perpetual check immediately on g7 and g3. (Black can then try ...e5!?, but the outcome is unclear. As Black just lost in the game we shall consider the answer to such diversions as beyond irrelevant.)

In this line it is not really important where the black king has gone. But it could make a difference if the white king went towards the centre, e.g. 25...♔e7 26.♖xb4 ♕a6†! 27.♔e1?:



Black's desired move here would be 27...♗d3!!, when suddenly the white king is trapped in a mating net. That is, if the king has gone to e7 rather than d7! Then there would be 28.♔e5† and White wins the queen.

I told you the logic would be beautiful. But unfortunately it does not fully add up. After 25...♔d7 26.♖xb4 ♕a6†! 27.♔e1!?, Black has a different idea in 27...♗g8!!.

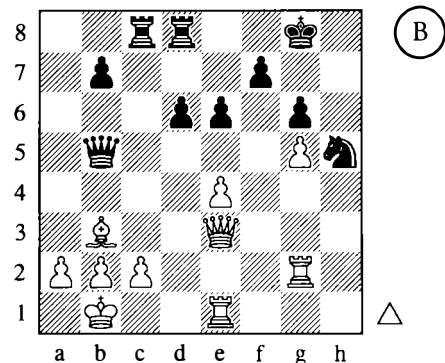
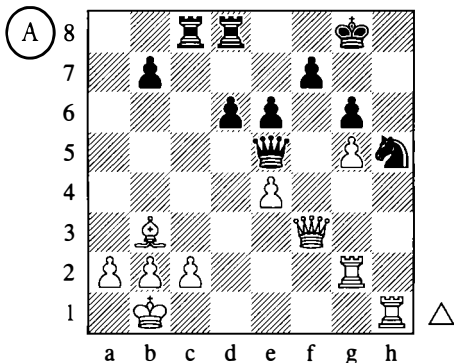


After 28.♗g8 ♕d3 Black can do without the rook; White has nothing better than perpetual check.

The general point here is that chess is difficult and at times our logic is not perfect. However, if we use tools such as comparison, we will have a better outcome than if we do not. The idea that we should see everything is just not practical.

The final example before we move on to the exercises is quite complex and is in many ways a logical continuation of the previous example. Why will become obvious along the way.

But the first thing to say is that Black is in a very difficult situation and probably could not save the game no matter what. However, by using the method of comparison, he managed to make it very difficult for his 2700+ rated opponent to navigate the position, and thus saved the game.



In **Position A** Black has been able to bring his queen to the great central square e5, from where it dominates both the queenside and protects the kingside. While in **Position B**, Black is one move away from putting his queen on e5, while White's queen and rook are placed differently.

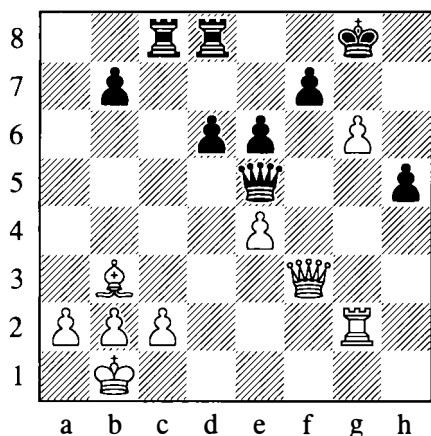
From a practical point of view I would steer away from Position A without calculating further and this was indeed what Smerdon did. The rook is passive on e1 and the various tactical ideas look less dangerous with the queen on e3. It looks far more aggressive on f3, where it is shooting at h5 and f7.

But once I come back home after a game I like to back up such logic with concrete analysis in order to improve my intuition. I am quite sure that if Smerdon had done this thoroughly his notes would have looked differently and he would have been quite surprised with the outcome.

But let's start by looking at the most obvious variation:

Position A

28.♖xh5! gxh5 29.g6



As a positional evaluation is rather difficult now (if you are looking for a conclusion other than “equal material”) only tactics are really important here. And this is the most dangerous tactical idea available.

29...f6

The only defensive move of any value, but White has not exhausted his resources yet.

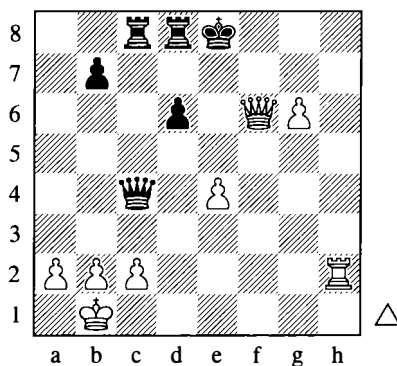
30.♗xe6†!! ♜xe6 31.♜xh5

The immediate threats are g6-g7 winning material and simply ♜h2 with a mating attack. There is no way I would have been able to calculate further than this without a lot of recent practice, and this position is not one I would want to endure!

Black only has one move at his disposal.

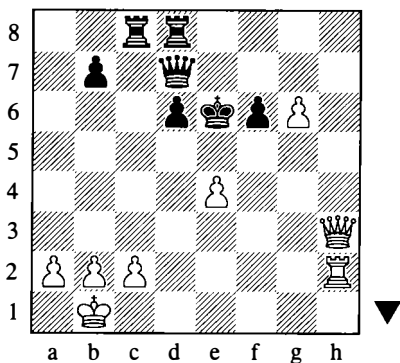
31...♜d7

31...♜f8 32.♜h8† ♜g8 33.♜xf6† ♜e8 34.♜h2 looks menacing, although Black has a nice defensive try in 34...♜c4:



White needs to throw in 35.b3! before trying anything else. Black cannot defend f7 and e6 with anything other than returning to g8. After this anything wins.

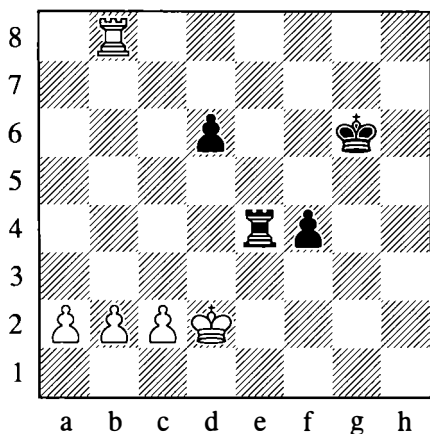
32.♜h2 ♜f8 33.♜h8† ♜e7 34.♜h7† ♜f8
After 34...♜e6 35.♜h3†!



Black is lost. For example 35...♔e5 36.♖g3† and 35...♔e7 36.♗b3!! ♕f8 37.♖h7 – and so on.

The main line move leads by force to a rook ending where White has a pawn more.

35.♗xd7 ♖xd7 36.♖h8† ♕g7 37.♖h7† ♕xg6 38.♖xd7 ♖e8 39.♕c1 ♖xe4 40.♖xb7 f5 41.♕d2 f4 42.♖b8

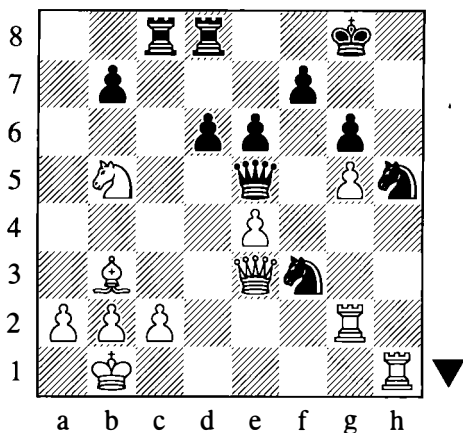


The final position could be analysed deeper with great accuracy, but moving the pieces around for a few minutes gives the impression that White wins by a tempo.

For **Position B** it is much harder to calculate the lines, as they are less forcing, at least on an immediate basis. But once you get deep into the position, you will see that the queen is not worse placed on e3.

Leinier Dominguez Perez – David Smerdon

Khanty Mansiysk (1.4) 2009

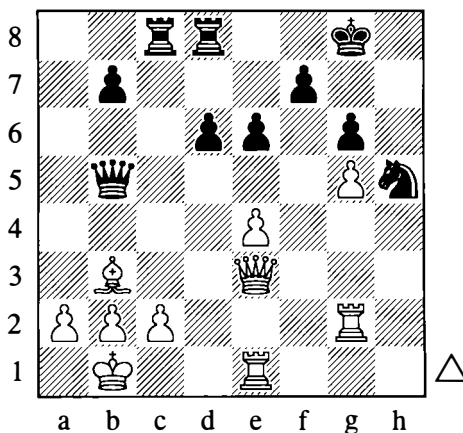


It is obvious that Black has to take the knight on b5 as his knight on f3 cannot be saved. But the circumstances are open to manipulation.

26...♔e1!?

A nice desperado move. I have often noticed that a very good way to calculate desperado situations (where everything is hanging) is to look for ways to sidestep the constant slugging of the pieces. With this move Smerdon steers towards Position B, while 26...♗xb5 27.♗xf3 ♗e5 would have landed him in Position A.

27.♖xe1 ♗xb5



We have arrived at **Position B**. Dominguez is known as a ferocious attacking player, but he did not find a way to cause sufficient damage to the black king's position.

28.c3?

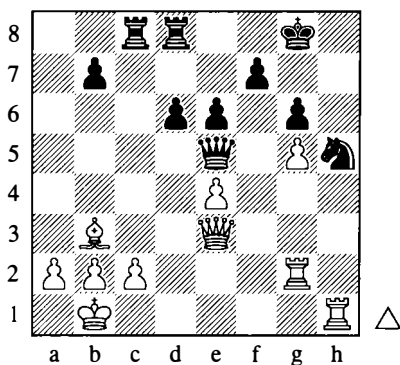
Not terribly energetic. If we look at the variations we will see that White is actually close to winning here as well, but Black's use of the comparison strategy made it difficult for his opponent to win the game.

28.♖h1!

The intention is obvious. White wants to take on h5.

28...♗e5

The natural centralizing move; Black brings the queen to the defence.

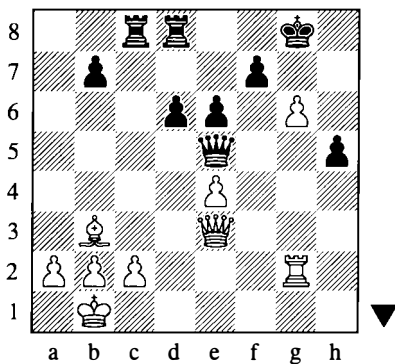


If we compare this with Position A then the position of the white queen is the only difference. This is quite important when we evaluate the exchange sacrifice:

29.♞xh5

29.♗f3 could probably be met with something hilarious like 29...b5, when the pawn is better placed than in Position A far down the line. But more importantly, Black has 29...♗f4 30.♗d3 ♗e5 and no particular problems. The computer values White's position very highly, but I cannot see that this is justified.

29...gxh5 30.g6



With the queen at e3 instead of f3, we spot the extra option of ♗h6!, but also that White is unable to deliver mate on f7. Black therefore does not have 30...f6 this time around, but he can try something else.

30...♕f8!?

Trying to run away; unashamedly.

31.gxf7!

The strongest move. Black will slowly be ground down with his open king and the many threats on the light squares.

31.♞f2? ♕g7 32.♞xf7† ♕xg6 33.♞e7 ♞e8 34.♞xb7 ♞g8 is roughly even, but certainly unclear.

31.♗f3? f6! is also nothing for White.

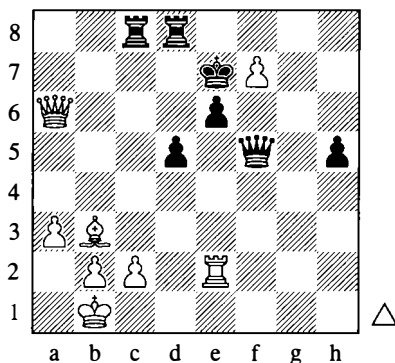
31...d5

31...♕e7 32.♞g5! ♗f6 33.♗g1 ♗f4 34.♞g6! is awful for Black.

32.a3 ♕e7

32...♗xe4 33.♗g5 ♗d4 34.c3 ♗h8 35.♞c2 and Black cannot hold this position forever.

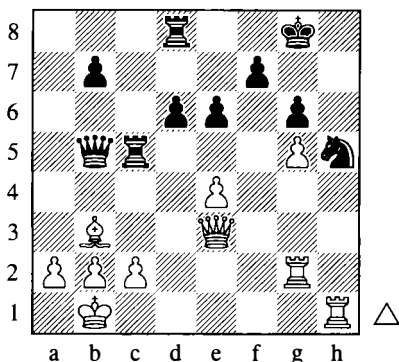
33.♗b6 ♗xe4 34.♗xb7† ♕d6 35.♗a6† ♕e7 36.♞e2 ♗f5



37.♔a2

White is winning in the long run. Black's king is too exposed and there is no way for him to activate his rooks and make his extra exchange felt.

On 28.♖h1 Black could also try 28...♙c5!? in order to bring the rook into the defence. But here White has a different strong continuation.



29.a4! A nice move that avoids back rank mate and at the same time drives the queen to an inferior square.

Black cannot stay on the diagonal, as after something like 29...♙a6 30.♙f3! ♖f8 31.♖gg1! White is ready to take twice on h5 and bring the rook to the h-file. Black will not survive.

Black's only try is 29...♙d7, but after 30.♖xh5 gxh5 31.g6 f6 White has 32.♙h6 ♙g7 33.♙xe6† ♔f8 and then simply 34.♙e3 with complete dominance. Black is doomed.

So Black is lost no matter what. But in the game Smerdon managed to confuse his Super-GM

opponent and *get away with it*. He was actually so happy with his decision that he gave 26...♙e1 a double exclamation mark in his annotations in *Chess Informant*.

28...♙e5 29.a3

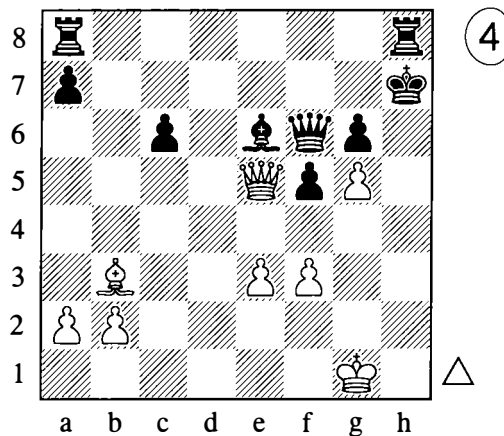
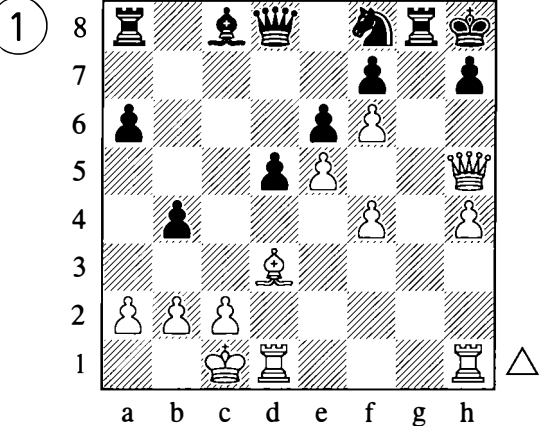
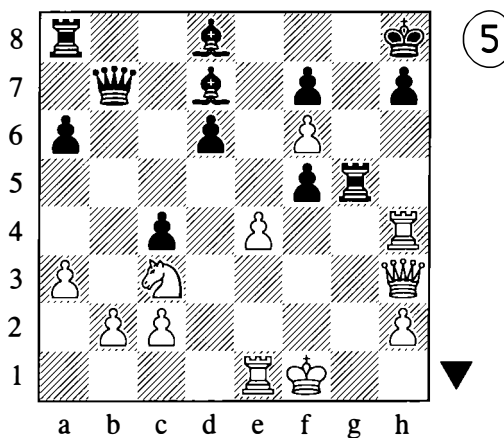
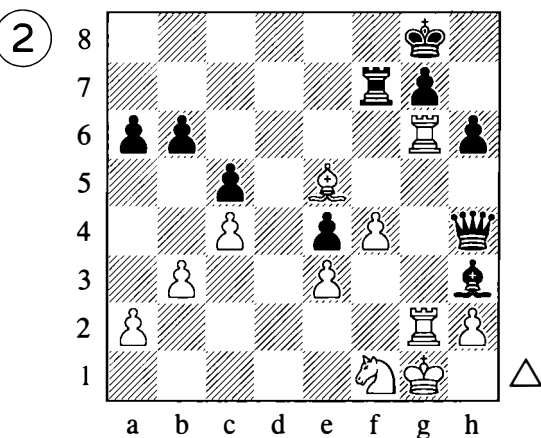
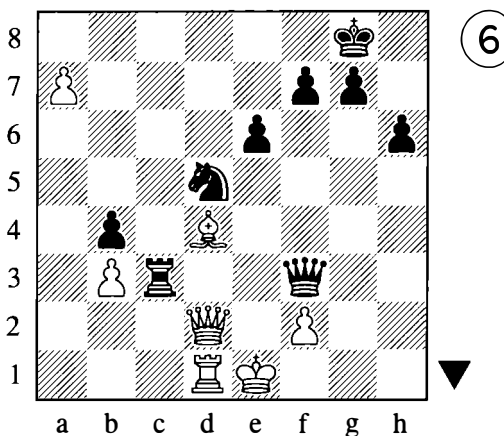
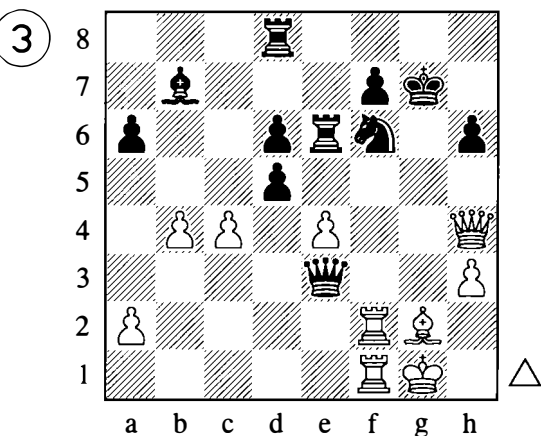
29.♖f1 b5 30.♙f3 ♖c7 looks okay for Black.

29...b5 30.♔a2 ♔g7 31.♖f1 ♖c7 32.♙f3 ♖a8 33.♖h1 ♖h8 34.♖d1 ♖d8 35.♖h1 ♖h8 36.♖d1 ♖d8 37.♖h1

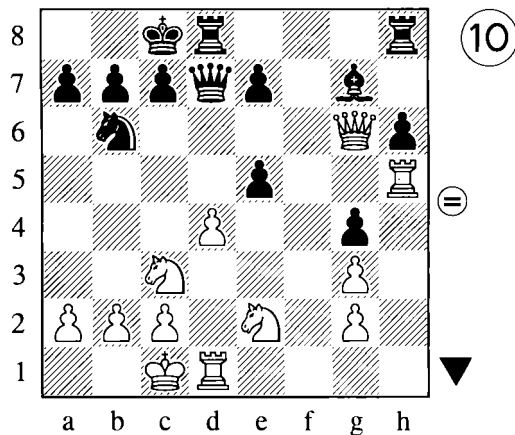
1/2–1/2

I hope this final example underlines one of my main points about these techniques (in this case *comparison*) that they are practical techniques to make effective decisions. They are not failsafe shortcuts that can replace calculating everything till the end. Instead they are brilliant shortcuts to making *better decisions than your opponent*, which is all that matters at the end of the day.

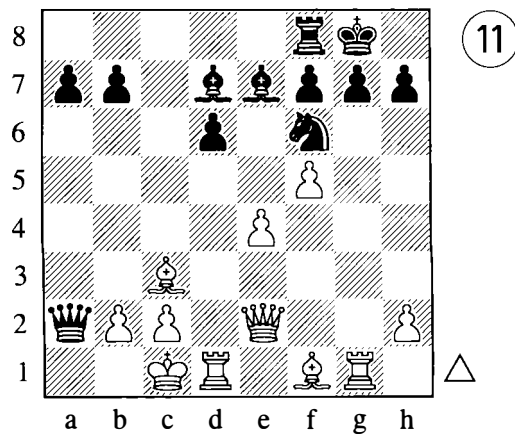
Chess is after all a game where the player with more ideas has a tendency to win. In this case the idea was so compelling that computers even support 26...♙e1!? as solving Black's problems, until you force them to go on the attack. At the board both players believed that Black had solved his problems and did not change their opinion in the post-mortem, when they looked at it with their computers and when Smerdon wrote his notes. That I can prove an advantage after all is a very small thing at the end of the day...

Mekhitarian – Rodriguez Fernandez, Manresa 2008**Emlyte – Lahno**, Wijk aan Zee 2012**Shvyrjov – A. Smirnov**, Tallinn (rapid) 2011**J. Polgar – Dominguez**, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011**J. Andersen – Ganguly**, Copenhagen 2010**Giffard – Andriasian**, Aix-les-Bains 2011

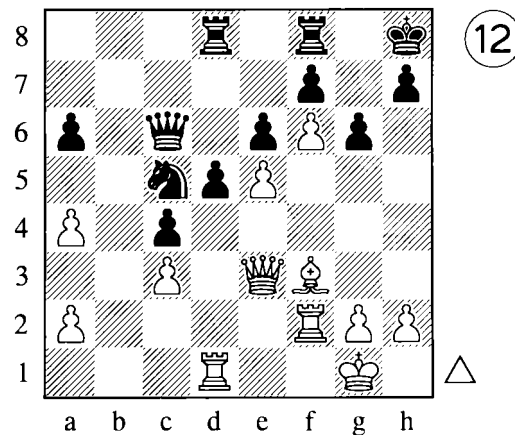
Idani – Gagunashvili, Baku 2011



Adams – G. Morrison, Sunningdale 2012



Pardo – G. Suarez, Spain 2011



1. Mekhitarian – Rodriguez Fernandez, Manresa 2008

20.♔d1! The right rook. In the game White made a worse choice with 20.♔h1? ♖g6! 21.♔g5±. **20...♖g6** This is the only defensive try of any relevance, aiming to get the queen involved in the defence. But because the rooks are better placed, White has a pretty winning combination: **21.♖xh7! ♗xh7 22.h5!+–**

2. Shvyrjov – A. Smirnov, Tallinn (rapid) 2011

26.♔xg7! White needs to play this, as otherwise the black king can escape from the scene of danger, carrying a sack full of gold. (Take the money and run, anyone?) In the game White played the horrific 26.♔g7?? ♔xg7 27.♔xg7 ♗f8. Black stood much better and won in 43 moves. **26...♗h7** Both 26...♔xg2 27.♔f6 ♗h7 28.♔xh4 ♗xg6 29.♗xg2 ♔d7 30.♖g3 and 26...♖h5 27.♔xh6 just win for White. **27.♔f6!!** 27.♔g3! ♔xf1 28.♗xf1 also gives White a winning attack, but the text move is clinical. **27...♔xf6** 27...♖xf6 would lose the ending. **28.♔g7 ♗h8 29.♔g8 ♗h7 30.♔g7#**

3. J. Andersen – Ganguly, Copenhagen 2010

White should take on d5 with the pawn he does not need for the defence of his kingside, that is, the c-pawn. **28.cxd5!** 28.exd5? ♖xd5! would lead to unclear play, as White cannot play 29.♖xd8? ♖f4, when both 30.♔xb7 ♔g6 ♗f4 and 30.♗h2 ♔xg2 are winning for Black. **28...♖xd5 29.♖xd8 ♖f4 30.♖h4?** 30.♗h2! would just win. Besides the exchange, the pressure down the f-file is unbearable. **30...♖xg2 31.♗xg2 ♔xe4 ♗f4 32.♗h2 ♔g6 33.♖g3 ♖xg3 ♗f4 34.♗xg3 d5 35.♔f4** White is still close to winning in the ending, but a combination of great respect for his opponent and irritation at not having won by this stage convinced Jackie (a male name in this instance – although his first rating appeared on the FIDE women's list!) that a draw was not a bad way to finish the game. ½–½

4. Cmilyle – Lahno, Wijk aan Zee 2012

Play continued: **31.♖xf6!±** A significant mistake. 31...♔xb3 32.♖e7 ♗g8 33.♖b7? (33.axb3 ♔f8 34.♖xa7 ♔f4 offers White serious chances, but Black might still hold.) 33...♔f8 34.♖xb3 ♔f7± The game was drawn on move 57.

If White had taken with the pawn it was almost impossible to stop her getting two connected passed pawns, should she want them: **31.gxf6! ♔xb3 32.axb3 ♔ad8** White also wins after 32...♔ae8 33.♖c7! ♗h6 34.♖f4 ♗h7 35.e4. **33.♖e7 ♗h6 34.♖g7 ♗g5 35.f7** White is completely winning. The direct threat is simply ♗f2-g3 followed by ♗f4. Black is forced to play **35...f4 36.exf4 ♗xf4 37.♖f6 ♗e3 38.♗g2**, where she again has no defensive plan. If nothing else White can take the pawn on g6 – with the king!

5. J. Polgar – Dominguez, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

27...♔xf6? This is poor as it allows the white knight to enter the game with gain of tempo, giving White the chance to trap the king in the corner. **28.♖d5 ♖xb2?** This is not a great move and I am surprised that a great player like Dominguez would come up with it. 28...♔g7? would also lose. White does not have to take on h7, transposing to the line with 27...♗g8! below, but can trap the black king with 29.♖e7!, when after 29...♔h6 30.♔xh6 ♔g7 31.♖c3! mate is near. The immediate threat is ♔xh7! and after 31...f4 32.♖f6! it can no longer be prevented in a reasonable way. For that reason Black should have changed course and tried 28...♔g1! 29.♗xg1 ♔xh4 30.♖xh4 ♔g8 31.♗h1 ♔g6 when he remains in the game. The chances are probably about equal, though to call the position clear would

be misleading. 29.♖xh7† ♕g8 30.♜h6! Black is lost. 30...♙d8 Probably Dominguez missed: 30...♙g7 31.♜h8†! ♙xh8 32.♜e7# 31.e5! Cutting off the queen. 31...♙g1† 32.♜xg1 ♜d4† 33.♜f1 1–0

27...♜g8! is correct, with the idea: 28.♖xh7 28.♜d5 fx4 is an important tempo gain for Black. 28...♙xf6 29.♜d5 ♙g7 This would have won the game and allowed Dominguez to progress to the next stage of the World Cup. White has no bite left. For example: 30.♖xg7† ♜xg7 31.♜c3† ♜h7! 32.♜h3† ♜g6 33.♜f4† ♜g7 34.♜c3† ♜g8 and Black wins.

6. Giffard – Andriasian, Aix-les-Bains 2011

The comparison is between having the queen on f3 and e4. Black wins after: 40...♜h1†! In the game Black got it wrong and played 40...♜c8?, when White could have equalized with 41.♜e2! ♜g2 42.♜a6 ♜e7 43.♙e3!=. Instead he lost after: 41.♙a1? ♜f4 42.a8=♜ ♜g2† 43.♜f1 ♖xa8 44.♖xa8† ♜xa8 45.♜xb4 ♜f4 0–1 41.♜e2 ♜e4† 42.♜f1 42.♙e3 ♜f4† is just mate. 42...♖h3!! White gets little help from the creation of an extra queen. 43.a8=♜† ♜h7 Amusingly the only way to avoid direct mate is by losing both queens with 44.♜e3, which is not serious, of course.

7. Nisipeanu – Burg, Plovdiv 2010

22...♙xe3†? It might seem sensible to chip in this check before taking the knight; especially as White is unable to recapture. But you really do not need two extra pieces to win a game of chess. One is enough – or even a pawn, as GM Henrik Danielsen always used to say to me. 23.♜h1! fx6 24.♜b8†! ♜f7 24...♜e7? 25.♜b7† and 26.fx6 would win for White. 25.♜b7† ♜g8 25...♜e8 26.fx6 would of course leave Black in a terrible situation. After 26...♖f8 27.♖d7 the mate threats are devastating. 26.♜c8† ♜f7 27.♜b7† 27.♜xe6† ♜f8 28.♜d6† was a draw as well. 27...♜g8 28.♜c8† ♜f7 29.♜b7† ½–½

22...fx6! was the correct choice. If left to his own devices, Black will just castle and take the full point. So White has to try something. The first variation you must take into account is the point of the exercise – that after 23.♜b8† ♜f7 24.♜b7† Black has 24...♙e7, shielding the king from the perpetual check. Secondly, after 23.♜xg7 ♙xe3† 24.♜h1 ♖f8 White has no threats and just two pieces less. The line might continue 25.fx6 ♜b6 26.e7 ♖f7 in your head, and White still has nothing.

8. Karjakin – Grischuk, Beijing (rapid) 2011

In the game Karjakin chose the wrong rook and had to live with a draw after: 50.♖fe1? 50.♖a5? ♖e2 51.f4 is nothing special. Black plays 51...♜c6 and can even claim to be slightly better. 50...♖d5 51.f4 ♜b6† 52.♜h1! White has to accept the draw now. After 52.♖e3? ♖c5!† 53.♜d4? ♖c1† Black wins the queen. And following 52.♜h2? ♜f2† 53.♜h3 Black has a winning attack after both 53...♖d2 and the more forcing 53...♖d3!! 54.♜xe5† ♜h6 55.♖g1 ♖d2 with mate. However 52.♜f1! would also draw. 52...♜b7 53.♜g1 ♜b6† 54.♜h1 ♜b7 55.♜g1 ♜b6† ½–½

Choosing the correct rook would have won the game quickly: 50.♖ae1! ♖d5 51.f4 ♜b6† 52.♖f2! (or even 52.♖e3!? ♖c5 53.♜d4!) and White wins.

9. Spasov – Debray, Cappelle la Grande 2011

The point of this exercise is that Black should not be allowed to gain an important tempo with ...♜b5 at a certain moment. 19.♜e3! 19.♜e2? would fail to win: 19...♜xh1 20.gxh6 ♜a1† 21.♜c2 ♜a4† Here White should play 22.♜c1! with a draw, as after 22.♜b1?! ♜b5! Black gains the tempo that makes all the difference. 23.♜g2 g5! 24.hxg6 ♜f5† 25.♜a2 fxg6 19...♜xh1 All the alternatives lead

to the same end. 19...♔a3!? 20.♖xf2 does not give Black enough counterplay. 19...♘g4 20.♙xg4 ♔xg5 21.♘xg5 ♖a1† 22.♙c2 ♖xh1 23.♘e4 f6 24.♖g3 with a winning attack. 19...♖a1† 20.♙c2 ♖a4† 21.♙b1 ♘h1 22.gxh6 and the black queen is out of play – compare this line with 19.♖e2?. **20.gxb6 ♖a1†** 20...g5 21.hxg6 fxg6 was a decent try, but Spasov probably would have dealt with it effectively. 22.h7†! Trying to open the h-file with gain of tempo. 22...♙h8 23.♘e5 White is winning. Black can play more moves, but will lose in the end: 23...♙f6 24.♘xg6† ♙xg6 25.♙xg6 ♖a1† 26.♙c2 ♖a4† 27.♙b1 ♖d1† 28.♙c1 ♙f8 29.♖e5† ♔f6 30.♙xf6 **21.♙c2 ♖a4† 22.♙b1 ♖b5** 22...♘g3!? 23.hxg7! has the point that 23...♙fd8 24.♖h6 wins. And if Black tries 23...♘f5 24.gxf8=♖† ♙xf8 25.♖e5 ♙e8 26.♙g8† ♔f8 27.♖e2 then the strength of the h-pawn assures White of the win. **23.♘e5!** An important move, cutting off the queen from the game. **23...g6** 23...♙ad8 24.♙xg7† ♙h8 also fails to make a draw. After 25.c4! ♖a4 White wins with a nice tactic: 26.♙g8†! ♙xg8 27.♘xf7† ♙h7 28.♖e4† and mate. **24.c4 ♖a4 25.hxg6 fxg6 26.h7†** Black resigned. **1–0**

10. Idani – Gagunashvili, Baku 2011

19...♙dg8! The correct rook. The point is that the rook will not be hanging on d8. Compare this with 19...♙hg8? 20.dxe5 ♔xe5 21.♙xd7 ♙xg6, where White just wins the bishop after exchanging rooks. It is much better for the rook on d7 to be hanging. Black has other moves, of course, but none of them solve all his problems. For example: 19...♖e8 20.♖xg4† ♘d7 21.dxe5± or 19...e6 20.dxe5 ♖e7 21.♘f4±, both with an uncomfortable existence for Black. **20.dxe5 ♔xe5 21.♙xd7 ♙xg6 22.♙xe7 ♔f6=** The game was eventually drawn in 62 moves. ...½–½

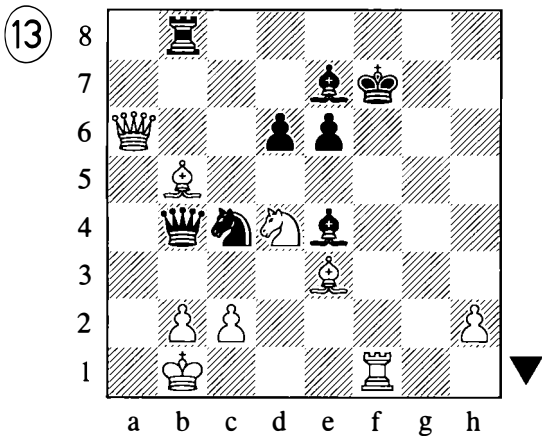
11. Adams – G. Morrison, Sunningdale 2012

18.♙xg7†! After 18.e5 dxe5 19.♖xe5 ♖a1† 20.♙d2 ♖a4! 21.♖xe7 ♖f4† 22.♙e1 ♙e8 23.♙xd7 ♙xe7† 24.♙xe7 ♙f8 25.♔xf6 gxf6 26.♙e2 White should of course win eventually, but Black will pick up the b2-pawn and can claim that White is a long way away from being fully coordinated. **18...♙xg7 19.♖g4†** Sabino Brunello found an alternative win that completely avoids the need for comparison with: 19.♖g2† ♙h8 20.♔c4!! ♖xc4 21.♙g1 and White wins. **19...♙h8 20.♖h4!!** A simple-looking move, but there is an important point. 20.♖g5? falls straight into the trap. Black would be right back in the game after 20...♖a1† 21.♙d2 ♖a5!!, when White's strongest continuation is: 22.♙e1 ♖d8 23.♙xd6 ♙g8 24.♔xf6† ♔xf6 25.♖xf6† ♖xf6 26.♙xf6 ♙g7 27.♙d6 ♔c6 28.♙g2 ♙e8 29.♙d4 ♙f6 and Black has real drawing chances because of the e5-square. **20...♙c8 21.♔xf6† ♔xf6 22.♖xf6† ♙g8 23.♔c4 ♖a1† 24.♙d2 ♖a5† 25.c3** **1–0**

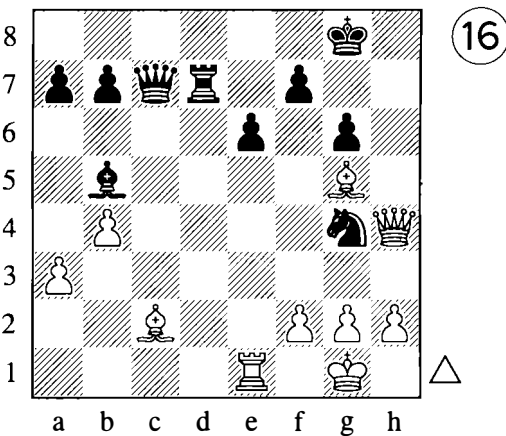
12. S. Pardo – G. Suarez, Spain 2011

The point of this exercise is that the rook needs to be on h4, but the queen can enter the attack from squares other than h6. **28.♙d4!** The game went poorly for White: 28.♖h6? ♙g8 29.♔e2? (29.♙d4 g5 30.♔d1! ♙g6 31.♖h5 ♘d3 32.♔c2 ♙b8 33.h4 ♖c7! [33...♘xf2 34.♔xg6 fxg6 35.♖h6 ♖c7 36.♘xf2 might be slightly better for White.] 34.♙e2 ♙b8 35.♙g4∞) 29...g5† 30.♙f3? ♙g6 31.♖h5 ♘e4+ Black won in 66 moves. **28...♙g8** 28...g5 29.♙xc4 ♙c8 30.♖xg5 ♙g8 31.♖h6 wins for White. **29.♙h4!** 29.♙xc4!± is also possible, but this is even stronger. **29...g5 30.♙h5 ♖b6** 30...♙g6 31.♔e4! is very similar. At first glance, Black does not seem to be in such great trouble, but after **31.g4!!** it is apparent that he is just lost. White is planning ♔e4 to force Black to put a piece on the b1-h7 diagonal, making it impossible to protect h7 after White goes ♖h3. **31...♙g6** 31...♖b1† 32.♙f1 ♖c2 struggles to convince because of 33.♖xc5. **32.♔e4!** Black will be mated.

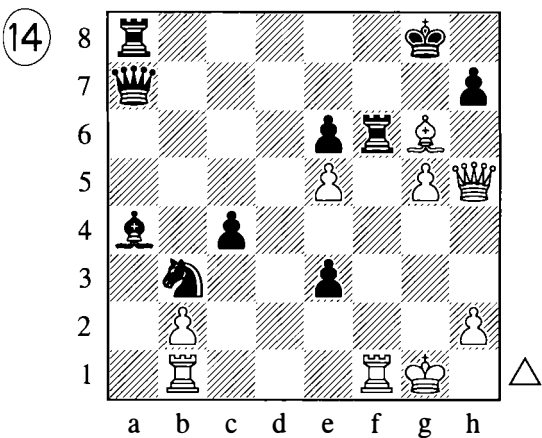
M. Yilmaz – Aveskulov, Kharkov 2011



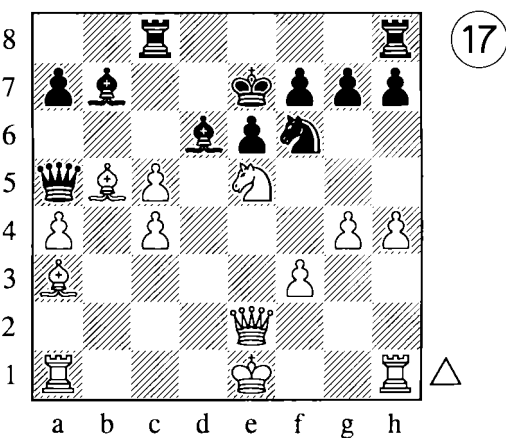
Jaracz – Bologan, Warsaw (rapid) 2011



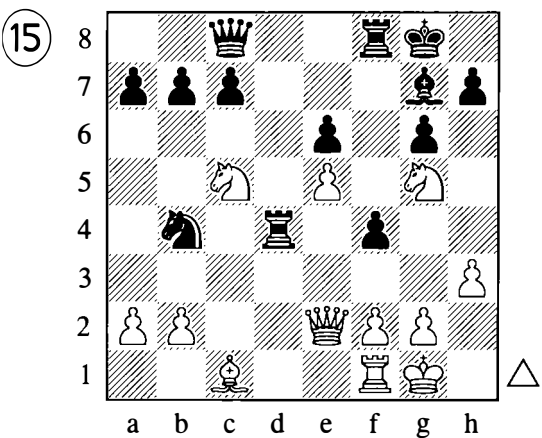
T. Kosintseva – Hoang, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010



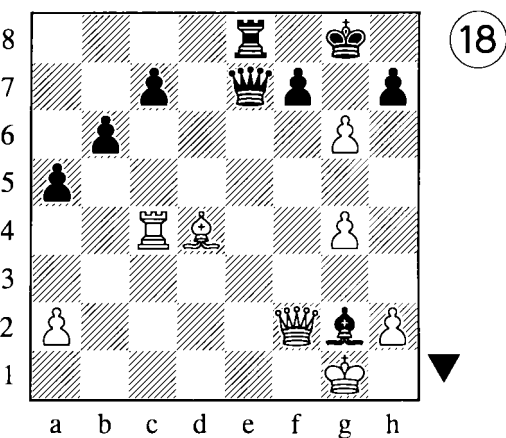
Kristiansen – A. Rasmussen, Helsingør 2012



Kramnik – Dominguez, Dresden (ol) 2008



Erdos – Sutovsky, Gibraltar 2012



13. M. Yilmaz – Aveskulov, Kharkov 2011

Black has a limited number of options. Moving the king or putting a bishop in the way. The question is how does this reflect on the lines to come? **28...♣g6?** 28...♠f5 29.♠xf5† and 28...♣g8 29.♠c1± make no great contribution to understanding the position. You can always find complications everywhere, but the main point is finding the relevant lines – as difficult as that is. **29.♠c1± ♠a8?! 29...♠d2† 30.♠xd2 ♣xd4 31.♠c3 ♣c5±** was a better try, but White has the advantage. **30.♠c6! ♣b3?** 30...♠xa6 31.♠xb4 ♠b6 32.♠xc4 d5 33.♠xd5 exd5 34.♠e2 would give White excellent winning chances, but it would still be better than what Black played. **31.♠g1†!** This does not throw away the game, but it is quite amusing that having started with a position in which comparison could have helped one of the players, a few moves later exactly the same method becomes relevant for the opponent – and that he drops a rook by getting it wrong – and wins anyway! One senses the light touch of time trouble on this move, rather than incorrect calculation. 31.♣xa8 was much simpler, of course, avoiding the rook being exposed on g1. **31...♠f7 32.♣xa8 ♠a3† 33.♣xa3 ♣xc2† 34.♠a2 ♣b1† 35.♠b3 ♣c2† 36.♠a2 ♣b1† 37.♠b3 ♣c2† 38.♠b4 ♣c5† 39.♠a5 ♣xg1 40.♣e3** White is in control and wins the game all the same. The blundered rook matters far less than the extra piece. **1–0**

28...♠f6! was the correct choice. White has a lot of legal moves in this position, but the only variation that really makes sense for calculation goes like this: **29.♠c1 ♠a8! 29...♠xb5** leads to a draw, but Black can do better than that. **30.♠c6** This should be White's cherished resource, but here it fails because of the active position of the bishop on f6. Black simply plays **30...♠d2†** and White will be mated. In passing we can note that 30.♠xf6† ♠xf6 31.♠c6 ♠d2† 32.♠xd2 ♣xd2 also wins for Black, on account of 33.♣xa8 ♣xc2† 34.♠a2 ♠d5†!.

14. T. Kosintseva – Hoang Thanh Trang, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010

The game continued: **34.gxf6? e2† 35.♠f2 hxf6 36.♣xg6† ♠h8 37.♣h6† 37.f7** looks strong, but once she got here Kosintseva must have realized that the outcome is by no means clear. Black is able to prevent the mate in one with **37...♣e3!**, making it clear why it would have been stronger for White to keep a pawn on g5 instead of e5. The computer likes to believe that White still has the better chances, but in reality we are heading towards a position Black can save. Here is a sample line: **38.♣f6† ♠h7 39.♣h4† ♠g7 40.♣g4† ♠h7 41.♣xe2 ♣xe2 42.♠xe2 ♠c6 43.♠f1 ♠d4 44.♠e3 (44.♠ef2 ♠f5=) 44...♠f5 45.♠xf5 exf5 46.e6 ♠d5 47.♠e5 ♠xe6 48.♠xe6 ♠g7 49.♠e5 ♠xf7 50.♠xf5† ♠e6** and Black should make a draw in this ending. For example with **51.♠b5 ♠c8** and the subsequent exchange of the c-pawn. **37...♣h7 38.♣xh7† ♠xh7 39.♠xe2 ♠c6?!** Black misses the chance to make a clean draw without too much suffering: **39...♠d4! 40.♠g2** (After **40.♠e3 ♠c2!** the activation of the black pieces secures a reasonably safe draw. Here there are many moves possible, but basically Black is ready for ...♠f5 or ...♠g6, with ...♠f5 and ...♠f3†xe5 as possible follow-ups. Also ...♠a2 becomes relevant in some lines. White has no advantage.) **40...♠c2 41.♠c1 ♠d3** White's advantage is minimal and not enough to win the game: **42.♠f2 ♠b8 43.♠e3 ♠f5† 44.♠f4 ♠h4** and the threat of ...♠g6† secures the draw. **40.♠f2! ♠g8** White also has good winning chances after **40...♠b8 41.♠e3 ♠c5 42.b4!**, where Black has to play **42...♠d3† (42...cxb3 43.♠g1 ♠e4† 44.♠e1** and Black is mated) **43.♠e2 ♠f4† 44.♠d2 ♠d8†** only to see her chances become rather poor after **45.♠c2. 41.♠g1 ♠xg1 42.♠xg1 ♠g6?** Giving White a handy tempo with the h-pawn. Stronger was **42...♠g8!** and it seems that White will struggle to win this very advantageous position. It will be close, but maybe only close. **43.♠f2 (43.♠e1 ♠c5 44.♠e3 ♠d3 45.b3 ♠xe5 46.♠xe5 cxb3 47.♠e1 ♠f7** looks like something Black could draw.) **43...♠c1 44.♠e3 ♠d3† 45.♠e2 ♠xb2 46.♠d2 ♠f8 47.h4 ♠e8 48.♠a3 ♠d3 49.♠a5** White

is in control, but the h-pawn is hard to protect and Black should be able to set up a fortress. For example: 49...♙g6 50.♖c3 ♖e1 51.♗xc4 ♖f3 and Black makes the draw. 43.h4 ♖d4 44.h5! ♗f7 44...♗h7 45.♙f2 ♖f3† 46.♗f1 ♖xe5 47.f7 ♖xf7 48.♙xf7† ♗h6 49.♙f6† ♗xh5 50.♙xe6 ♙a4 51.♙f6 ♗g5 52.♙f2 and the white king goes to d4, ready to win the c-pawn. 45.♙e3 ♖f5 46.♙a3 ♖h6 47.♙a7† ♗g8 48.♙g7† ♖f8 49.♙c7 ♙d5 50.♙c8† ♗f7 51.♙h8 ♖g4 52.h6 ♖xe5 53.h7 ♗g6 54.f7 ♖xf7 55.♙f8 ♗xh7 56.♙xf7† ♗g6 57.♙f8 ♙e4 58.♗f2 ♗g7 59.♙c8 ♙d3 60.♗e3 ♙f1 61.♗d4 ♗f7 62.♗e5 ♗e7 63.♙c6 ♗d7 64.♙xe6 ♗c7 65.♗d4 ♗b7 66.♙e1 ♙d3 67.b3 ♗c6 68.bxc4 ♙f5 69.♙f1 ♙h3 70.♙f6† ♗d7 71.♗c5 1–0

34.exf6! was the correct capture. White wins after 34...e2† 35.♙f2 hxg6 36.♙xg6† and now both 36...♗h8 37.f7 and 36...♗f8 37.♙h6† ♗e8 38.f7† are just “resigns”. How come Kosintseva did not play this? Probably she did not notice the difference between the two captures till it was too late. Maybe she did not conceptually look for it?

15. Kramnik – Dominguez, Dresden (ol) 2008

25.♖xe6! The critical point was that after 25.♖xe6?! the knight on c5 would be exposed and occupying an important square as well: 25...f3! 26.♙b5 (26.gxf3 ♙d5! 27.♙c4 b6! 28.♖xf8 bxc5 29.a3 ♙a6=) 26...c6 27.♙xb7 ♙xb7 28.♖xb7 ♙xe5 with even chances in the ending. 25...c5 25...f3 does not work now. 26.♙b5! fxe2 (26...c6?! 27.♙c5!+– is the crucial difference.) 27.♗xg2 ♙d7 28.♖xd4 ♙xd4 29.♙xb7 and White is more or less winning. 25...♙d5? 26.♙c4! and White wins. Again it is useful there is no knight on c5 to target with ...b6. In the game Kramnik now went wrong with 26.♖xf8?! with only a slight edge, which was not enough to win the game. Stronger would have been: 26.♖xd4! cxd4 27.♙f3 ♙c4 28.♙xb7 h6 29.♖f3 White is close to winning.

16. Jaracz – Bologan, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

38.♙xg6! ♙c3! 38...♙e5! was stronger. After 39.♙h7† ♗f8 40.♙h6† ♖xh6 41.♙xh6† ♗e7 White is possibly better, but it is nothing drastic. 39.♙b1! ♙d4 39...fxg6 40.♙xg4 ♙c4± might still make the draw if combined with tough defence. White cannot avoid the exchange of queens in view of: 41.♙h3! ♙e2! 42.f3 ♙d3 43.♙c1 ♙c7! 44.♙a1 ♙e5 45.♙d1 ♙e2! = 40.♙h7† ♗g7 41.♙c2 White went on to win.

38.♙b1? ♙c3 leaves the rook out of squares. After 39.f3!± White is in the game still, but it hurts.

38.♙b3! was the correct move. The point is that after 38...♙c3 White has 39.♙c1! winning.

17. Kristiansen – A. Rasmussen, Helsingor 2012

White achieves nothing with 21.♙d2, when he might even be worse, and after 21.♗d1 Black is okay after the rather obvious exchange sacrifice 21...♙xc5!. So White has to move to the f-file with the king. But where? 21.♗f2? The wrong choice, after which the chances are roughly level. 21...♙xc5† 22.♙xc5† 22.♙e3? does not work as Black has 22...♙d2† winning the queen. This game would fit very well in an elementary tactics book to illustrate pins! 22...♙xc5 23.♙hd1 Again a poor choice and one Kristiansen quickly regretted. Correct was: 23.♙ad1 ♙c3! = 23...a6?? A horrible blunder. Black was running out of time, but still dreamt about winning the game. 23...♙c7! would have equalized as there is a check on h2 after 24.♖d3. 24.g5! axb5 25.gxf6† gxf6 26.♙d7† ♗e8 27.♙xb7 ♙xe5 28.♙d3 ♗f8 29.♙g1 bxc4 30.♙d6† 1–0

21.♗f1! was the right move. After 21...♙xc5 White has a very strong option in 22.♙e3!! putting maximum pressure on the a3–e7 diagonal. Black has to give up the exchange after 22...♙b6 23.♖c6† and fight on in a lost endgame with no real hope of survival.

18. Erdos – Sutovsky, Gibraltar 2012

Chess is a game and it has to be played. This is easy to forget when we analyse with our computers. Most decisions in a chess game will be the solution of minor problems, not related to winning or losing the game, but to getting the best chances of going in that direction. The method of comparison is very useful in this case as well.

29...hxg6?! is incorrect as it leads by force to an ending with opposite-coloured bishops: 30.♖f6! (30.♗xg2 ♖e4† 31.♗f3 c5 is hopeless for White, the main reason being: 32.♗xe4 ♙e4 33.♗f3 f5!–+) 30...♗xf6 (30...♗e1†? 31.♗xg2 ♖e2† 32.♗h3 is no use) 31.♙xf6 I am sure Emil did not need to look any further to convince himself that this was an undesirable ending. However, with enough time and the assistance of a computer it is sometimes nice to prove that one's intuition is correct and that White draws this ending without having to solve too many problems. 31...♙f3 32.♗f2 ♙d1!? Black is trying to win a bit of time by attacking the g-pawn. (32...b5 33.♖c5 ♖e6 34.g5 ♙c6 35.♙d8 and White will draw without any problems.) 33.♙d4! Tempo gain and a prelude to exchanging rooks. 33...♙e2 34.♙d8 (34.g5 also draws, of course.) 34...♙xd8 35.♙xd8 The ending is an easy draw. For example: 35...♙c4 36.♙xc7 ♙xa2 37.♙xb6 a4 38.g5, where White will bring the king to a1 with a deader than dead draw. 29...♙d5? 30.♖xc7! would see Black in some trouble. After 30...♗e1† 31.♗xe1 ♖e1† 32.♗f2 ♖e8 Black can hold, but not after 30...♗xc7? 31.gxh7† with a mating attack. Finally, 29...♙e4?! 30.♗xf7† is just a draw immediately.

29...fxg6!! 30.♗xg2! After 30.♗xg2? ♖e4! Black wins. White will lose the bishop as 31.♗c2 ♖e1† is obviously hopeless. 30.♗f6 ♗xf6 31.♙xf6 ♖e2! 32.♖xc7 ♖xa2 is not necessarily winning for Black, but it is suddenly very close. **30...♗e4†!?** An interesting practical solution. Emil is very strong in calculation and will have had full control over the lines and known that a queen ending was on the way. He has also studied theoretical endings and will have known both that it is a theoretical draw and that his close friend Boris Gelfand won the same ending against Jobava some years back. Also strong, but with a lesser degree of control was 30...♗d7 when, for example, 31.♗f3 is strongly met by 31...b5. White's only move is therefore 31.♖c3!, when the following line seems forcing: 31...♖e4 32.♙e3 ♖xg4† 33.♗f1 ♗d1† 34.♗e1 ♗f3† 35.♙f2 ♗g2† 36.♗e2 ♖e4† (36...♖f4!∞ is also unpleasant for White, but not necessarily stronger.) 37.♖e3 ♖xe3† 38.♗xe3 ♗xh2 I suspect that this ending is a draw as well, but at least it is not a theoretical draw. **31.♗f3 c5 32.♗xe4 ♖xe4 33.♗f3! ♙xd4 34.♙xd4 cxd4 35.♗e4 ♗f7 36.♗xd4 ♗f6 37.♗c4 ♗g5 38.♗b5 ♗xg4 39.♗xb6 a4!** This clearly shows that Sutovsky knows that the white king should be lured away from the top corner. **40.♗b5 a3! 41.♗b4 ♗h3 42.♗xa3 ♗xh2 43.♗b4 g5 44.a4 g4 45.a5 g3 46.a6 g2 47.a7 g1=♗ 48.a8=♗** This queen ending is a draw, but it is not easy to hold for White. So, from a practical point of view, Sutovsky's decision to enter it was justified. **48...♗g4† 49.♗a5!** Going in the right direction. However, Erdos was not confident enough, as we shall see. **49...♗f5† 50.♗b6 ♖e6† 51.♗c5 ♖e3† 52.♗b5 h5 53.♗d8 ♗f4 54.♖e8 ♗f5† 55.♗a6 ♗d3† 56.♗a5! 56.♗a7** is the theoretically recommended area for the king. The opposite corner is the place where it is best able to avoid being pinned or checked, after which a draw is relatively easy. **56...♗c3† 57.♗b5 h4 58.♗f7 ♗d3† 59.♗a5 ♗d2† 60.♗a6 ♖e2† 61.♗a5 ♖e5† 62.♗a6 ♗d6† 63.♗b5 ♗g3 64.♗g7† ♗f4 65.♗f7† ♗e3 66.♗h5 ♗d7† 67.♗a5 h3 68.♗g5† ♗e4 69.♗h4† ♗d3 70.♗g3†?** It is only this mistake that loses the game, but the two drawing moves, 70.♗h5 and 70.♗e1, have a feeling of randomness about them. With the king on a8 White would not have such issues, but would have many drawing moves. **70...♗c2 71.♗g6† ♗d3 72.♗h5 ♗d2† 73.♗a4 h2 74.♗h7† ♗c1 75.♗h3 ♗d4† 76.♗a3 ♖c5† 77.♗b3 ♗d5† 78.♗a3 h1=♗ 79.♖c3† ♗d1 0–1**

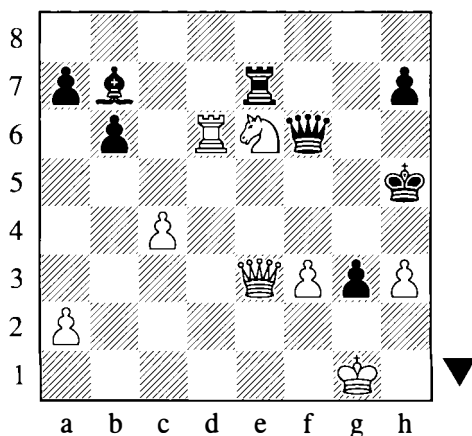
Chapter 5

Elimination

When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth – Sherlock Holmes

Lisa Schut – Matthew Sadler

Wijk aan Zee 2012



Black to play

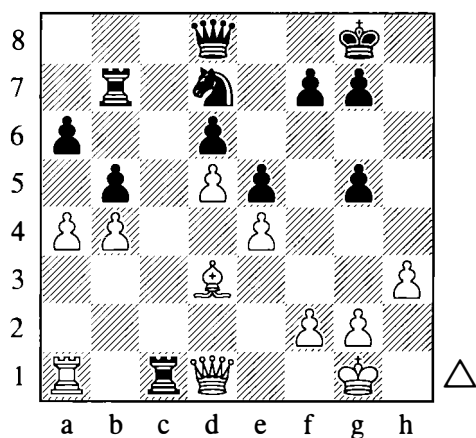
It is great seeing Matthew Sadler back in action after more than a decade's absence from top chess. Will he do as well as Gata Kamsky and regain all of his previous strength, or will he be a happy amateur of 2600 strength? Here he escaped with Black, but only by luck. The level needed to solve this position is very high – but a lot of time will also do it. All but one of Black's moves can be refuted by force in not such difficult ways. Without elimination you will struggle, but if you instead focus on finding the wins against almost all legal moves, you will eventually fail – and thus succeed.

The method of elimination is exceptionally useful for complex situations. The main idea is simple, you have a number of moves, two or more, and you do not really know which one has the highest merit. But by looking for their faults rather than their merits, you can eliminate some of the moves and play one that has no great faults.

Here is a recent example from one of my own games.

Jacob Aagaard – Kim Pilgaard

Helsingør 2012



I won the game after poor play by both players. This is what can easily happen in the first round of a tournament, when two rusty players who are no longer trying hard to prepare for tournaments meet.

29. ♖xc1?

I have to admit that I played this rather quickly and on general grounds. I just wanted to keep an eye on the g5- and a6-pawns. I could not really work out what I should be looking at. This is where the method of elimination would have come in handy.

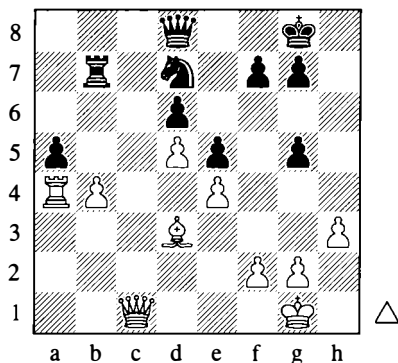
If I had been actively looking for the faults with this capture, my intuitively and logically most obvious move, I would have found

them rather easily, I hope, and played the alternative.

29... bxa4 30. ♖xa4 ♜b8?

Kim was a bit low on time and played this with a painful expression on his face.

In the commentary room they spotted a nice equalizing shot, which remained a secret to the players until we went there. 30...a5!!

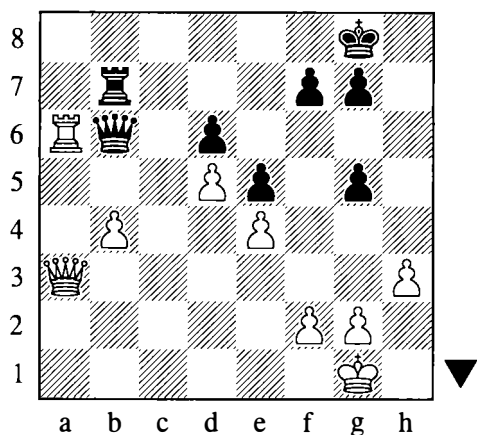


This surprising move exploits the overloading of the white pieces and eliminates Black's chronic weakness. If White takes with the rook the b4-pawn is lost, and 31.b5? just drops a pawn. So, there is no real alternative to 31.bxa5 ♜c5 32. ♖a3, when the most accurate is 32... ♖a7! after which Black will regain his pawn and achieve a draw.

So why did Kim, a strong IM, not find this nice move? The real explanation is that he was not looking for it. Mentally he had already given up.

But let's return to the initial decision, now with the knowledge that the correct move was 29. ♖xc1!, which would have allowed White to retain his great positional advantage. After 29...g6 30.axb5 axb5 31. ♖c6 ♜b8 32. ♖c2± Black will suffer for a long time and not necessarily live to tell the tale.

31. ♖a3± ♖b6 32. ♖xa6 ♜xa6 33. ♖xa6



33...♙d4?

Despite the mistake a few moves back, only this appears to be the decisive error. Black is immediately mated.

I was expecting the game to end in a draw with simple play:

33...♙xb4

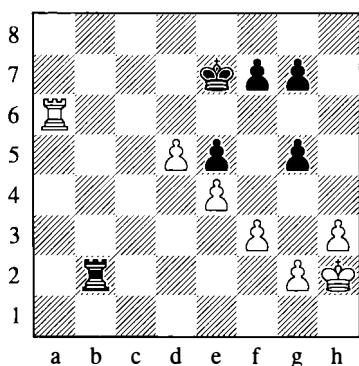
Now the attack with 34.♖b8† ♔h7 35.♙f3 does not work because of 35...♖b8! and the tactics work in favour of a draw.

Instead Kim rejected this option because of:

34.♙xb4 ♖xb4 35.f3!

This was indeed my intention; White wins the d6-pawn. But I did not think it would win the game and it appears this is correct. My thinking during the game was not crystal clear, but the main idea was correct.

35...♖b1† 36.♔h2 ♔f8 37.♖xd6 ♔e7 38.♖a6 ♖b2



I suspect that Black will hold with best play. It is very difficult for White to get the king into the game. If White puts the king on g3, Black will play ...g6 in order to meet ♖f1 with ...f7-f5!, preventing ♖f2 and preparing to weaken the e4-pawn. Am I sure? No, but does it matter?

34.♖a8† ♔h7 35.♙f3!

1-0

If we forget about Kim's disillusionment with his position and previous play, we can see that an emotionally neutral player would not have lost in 35 moves. He would have reached the diagram above and then taken it one move at a time. Now, I think that a draw is the correct outcome in the rook ending, but really it is not something that Kim needed to decide during the game. What he did was to eliminate the better of the options on an assumption that it was hopeless and thus blundered straight into an easy mate. Had he used the method of elimination correctly and looked at both his choices, his outcome would have been far better and he would most likely have held the game, despite his assumptions.

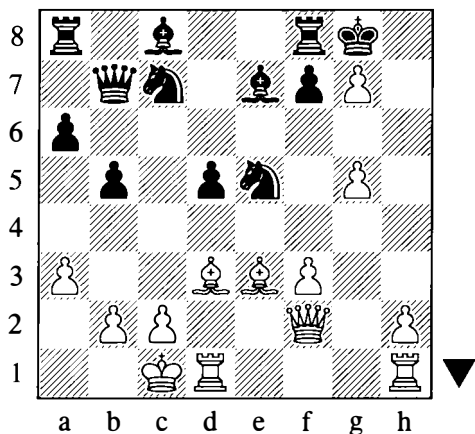
Let go of assumptions and replace them with calculation techniques. If used with skill this will give you a better result nine times out of ten.

As you might have already worked out, although the method of elimination can be used in many situations, it is especially useful in a defensive scenario. One of the important things to note is that we do not need to eliminate all but one of the possible moves. This is of course the case with the exercises in this section, but in practical play more than one move may survive our elimination attempts.

In the next game Black had four moves of interest, where first of all he needed to eliminate two of them in order to understand that he needed to let go of his rook to stay in the game.

Parimarjan Negi – Suri Vaibhav

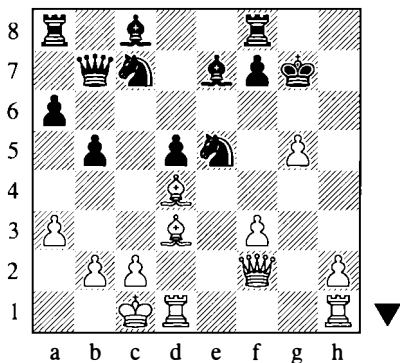
New Delhi 2011



White has sacrificed a piece for a dangerous attack (with ♖f6† as an interesting novelty) and then another one. In return he has managed to rip open Black's kingside.

Our approach to this position as eliminationists, should such a word not hurt your ear too much, would be to first look at the most obvious moves and only move on to the less obvious, should these prove to be too dangerous for comfort.

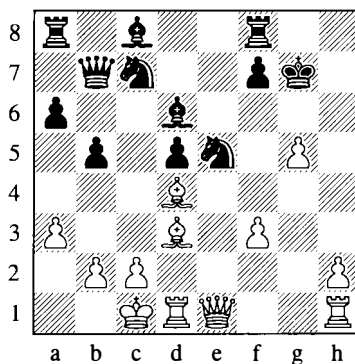
The first move to check out would definitely be 21...♖xg7. White's reply is by no means a surprise: 22.♗d4



This is actually quite uncomfortable. If we take on g5, White has f3-f4 and our problems will only multiply after opening the g-file.

And after 22...f6 we will also suffer greatly. White opens the position and our problems are quite extensive. First he wins back the piece with 23.gxf6† ♗xf6 24.♖g3† ♖f7 25.♗xe5. Now a check on g6 is threatened. And after 25...♗g8 26.♖f4 ♖e8 he has 27.h4! with the idea h4-h5 and ♗g6†. This is winning, which is of course not something we can easily determine at the board. What we can decide however is that the position is very difficult.

So, it is more reasonable to play 22...♗d6, but after 23.♖e1! the position is still hugely unpleasant for Black.



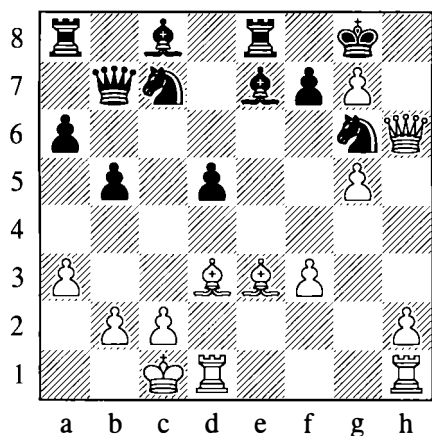
There are a lot of details, but for now we can put it away as partly eliminated. If all else fails, we can return to this and see how bad it actually is (which is what Pilgaard should have done with the unpleasant rook ending above).

The other very natural move is to not take the pawn, but just move the rook. This is what Black did in the game.

21...♗e8?

The deficiency with this move is not immediately apparent, but quite soon it becomes obvious just how much trouble Black is in.

22. ♖h4 ♜g6 23. ♖h6!!



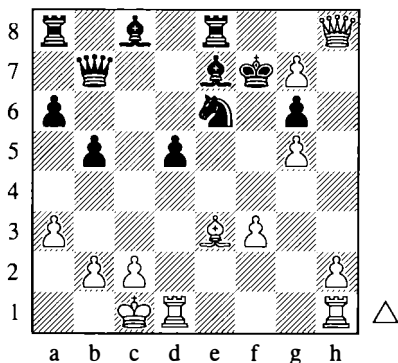
Once you realize White has this idea, you see the problems Black faces. White is planning h4-h5 with a deadly attack. There is no sensible way to deal with this.

23... ♗c6

Black also loses after the alternatives:

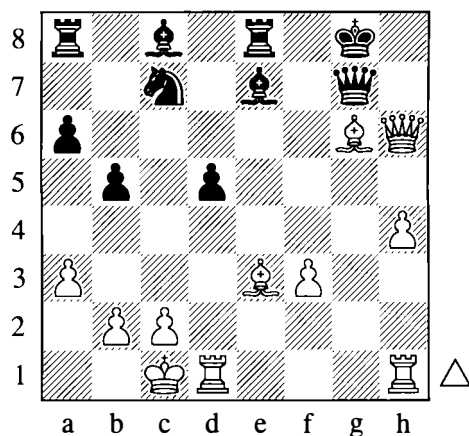
23... d4 24. h4! dxe3 (or 24... ♗xf3 25. ♔d2 ♔f5, when White just marches on: 26. h5 ♔f8 27. hxg6 ♔xg7 28. ♖h7+ ♜f8 29. ♖df1) 25. ♔xg6 fxg6 26. h5 ♔xg5 27. ♖h8+ ♜f7 28. hxg6+ ♜xg6 29. g8=♖+ and it is time to resign.

And after 23... ♜e6, the control of e8 is lost: 24. ♔xg6 fxg6 25. ♖h8+ ♜f7



26. ♖xe8+ ♜xg7 27. ♖he1 and White wins.

24. h4 f5 25. gxh6 ♖xf6 26. ♔xg6 ♖xg7

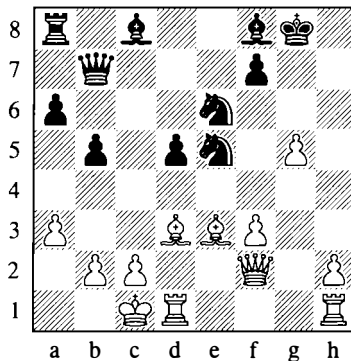


27. ♔h7+ ♜f8 28. ♖h5

Black resigned. There is no defence against ♔h6.

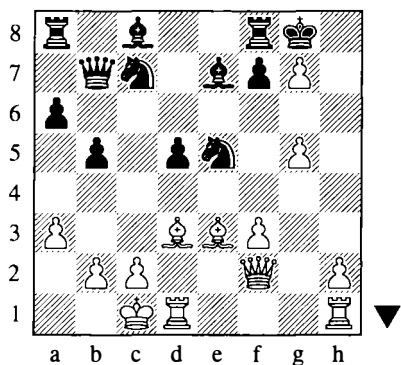
1-0

Having established that the two most natural moves do not work, we should consider giving up the rook. After all, Black is two pieces up and would still be material up. The first thing to look at is 21... ♜e6?! 22. gxh6=♖+ ♔xf8±.



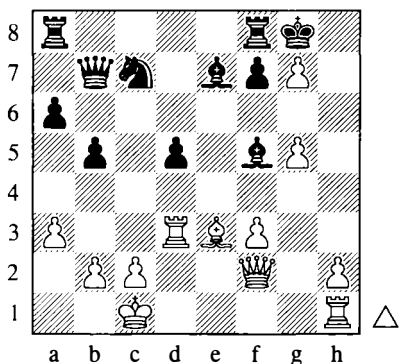
White has some ideas with h2-h4 and ♖he1, but there are no direct targets. To talk about refuting this does not make a lot of sense. But we could say that White, with his two pawns and generally active position, has the better chances. How much better is a debate, but up to this point nothing better has presented itself.

Once you have the idea of not moving the rook, a more active possibility comes into the picture:



21...Qxd3+ 22.Bxd3 Qf5

Please note that the position after 22...Qxg7 23.Qd4+ Qg6 24.f4 still looks highly uncomfortable.



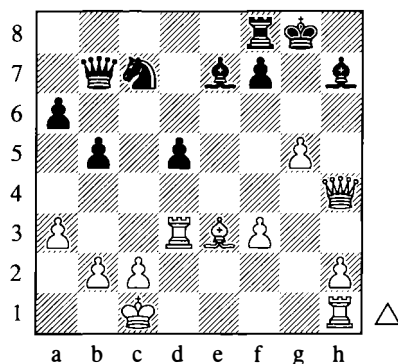
The black pieces are heading for better squares than previously. The bishop is brilliantly placed on f5 and the knight will also be well placed on e6. If White just takes on f8 Black will be well prepared for the rest of the middlegame, so White needs to put a bit more pressure on before taking the rook.

23.Wh4 Qh7

Now White has to take on f8.

24.gxf8=W+ Bxf8

Taking with the bishop is also possible, but let's stay with this line for now as it prevents the pawn sacrifice g5-g6.



At this point it is obvious (at least to me) that Black's play cannot be said to be refuted – or even close. Personally I would just play this and see what would happen, leaving later decisions for later. But having the time to analyse this with the aid of a computer, I can give a better evaluation here.

25.Qd4

White is just worse after 25.Bg1 Qe6 26.Bg3 Qf5+. There is no mate on the h-file and Black is well positioned for the future.

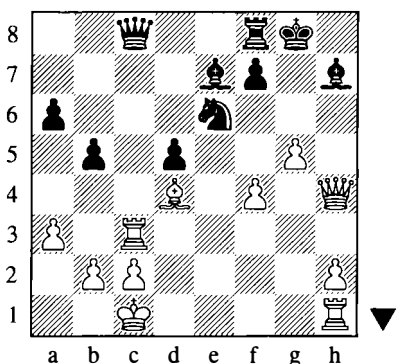
25...Qe6 26.f4

The only move. White cannot slow down his dynamic activities or Black would consolidate and enjoy his control of the light squares.

26...Wc8

Threatening mate on c2 and winning a tempo.

27.Bc3



White throws in a defence against mate, trying to convince the black queen to

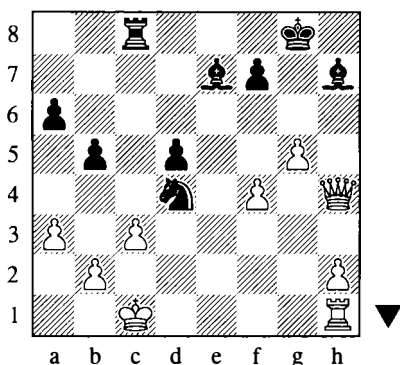
sidestep and then allow ♖h3 with mate following shortly after. Fortunately Black has a very pleasant way to solve this problem.

27...♙xd4!

Sacrificing the queen to get rid of all of the opponent's active pieces.

28.♖xc8 ♖xc8 29.c3

Black clearly has good compensation, but the position is simply unclear. Black does have a nice-looking combination, but it does not necessarily win the game.



29...♖xc3! 30.bxc3 ♕xa3 31.♙d1 ♕c2 32.♙d2 ♙f3 33.♙xc2 ♙xh4

Black has some winning chances in the endgame, but if you continue to analyse, you will find that with precise play White will be able to swoop enough pawns off the board to make a draw.

Rather a complicated example, but remember that this was one of very few moments in the game where it actually made sense for Black to spend his time. Had he invested 30 minutes into eliminating the various options here, I think he could have worked this out and at least have saved the game.

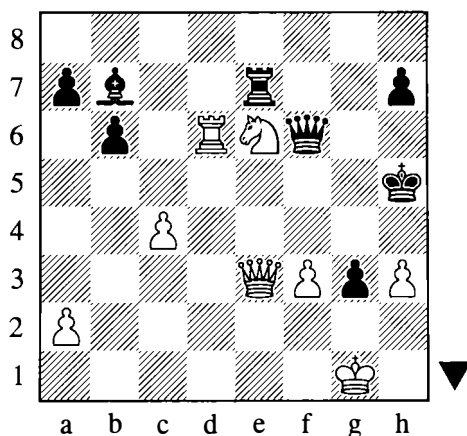
The method of elimination is a sort of prophylaxis in that you offer your own move up to your opponent in your mind, and for a moment you look at the position from his side, trying to knock down what you are coming up

with. This can be a time-consuming process, but it can also be rather rewarding.

The final example is virtually impossible to solve, should you try to do so in any other way than elimination. So, let's shoot down Black's moves one by one till we run out of bullets!

Lisa Schut – Matthew Sadler

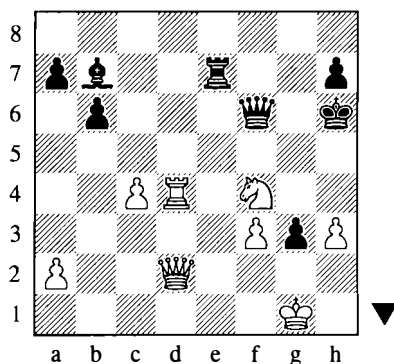
Wijk aan Zee 2012



Let's start by eliminating what Sadler played in the game:

45...♙h4? 46.♖d4 ♙h5 47.♙f4 ♙h6 48.♙e6!?

Trying to repeat the position. It would have been better to first bring the queen to safety with 48.♖d2!, when Black would struggle to come up with a response to ♙d5.



There are a few lines, but we can quickly determine that Black is lost.

48...♖e8 49.♘d5+ ♗g5 50.♖h4+ and White wins.

48...♗g5 49.♘d6+ wins the queen immediately.

The computer defence is 48...♖e1+! 49.♖g2 ♕xf3+ 50.♖xf3 ♖f1+, but White wins with either 51.♖e3 or 51.♖e4 ♗e7+ 52.♘e6+ ♖g6 53.♘d6 and the extra piece is permanent.

48...♖g6!?

Sadler had probably spotted White's win on the previous move and maybe feared that White just wanted to repeat before executing it.

49.♖g4+?

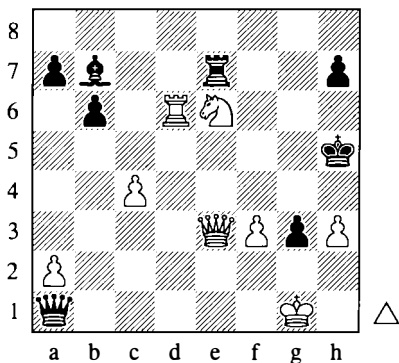
This wins the queen, but not the game. Both 49.♘d6 and 49.♗d3+ ♖h6 50.♗d2+ ♖g6 51.♖g4+ ♖f7 52.♘d8+ were reasonably simple wins, but I assume that White was running out of time and nervous energy.

49...♖f7 50.♖f4 ♖xe6 51.♖xf6+ ♖xf6 52.♗d3 ♕xf3 53.♗xh7+ ♖f8 54.♗xa7 g2 55.♗b8+ ♖f7 56.♗c7+ ♖f8 57.♗d8+ ♖f7 58.♗d7+ ♖f8 59.♗d4 ♖f7 60.♖h2 ♕c6 61.♗xb6 ♖f1 62.♗c7+ ♖f8 63.♗d8+ ♖f7 64.♗c7+ ♖f8 65.♗c8+

½–½

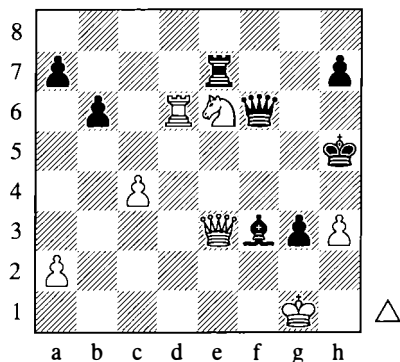
Other moves are also easy to get rid of:

45...♗a1+?



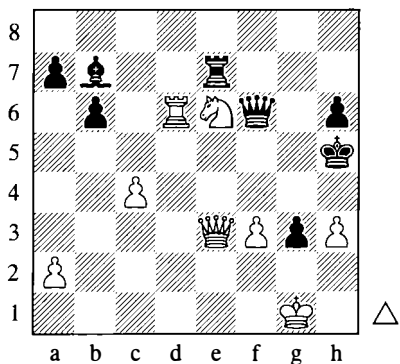
46.♖g2 ♗f6 47.♖xg3 wins for White.

45...♕xf3? is refuted by a nice combination:



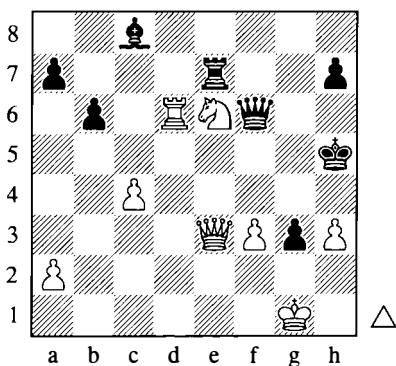
46.♘g7+!! ♖h4 (46...♗xg7 47.♗xf3+ ♖h4 48.♖h6+ with mate to follow) 47.♗xe7! and White wins.

45...h6?



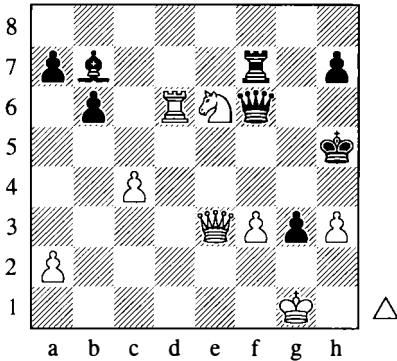
46.♘f4+ ♖g5 47.♖h4+ ♖xh4 48.♗xe7! does not require any further calculation.

45...♕c8?

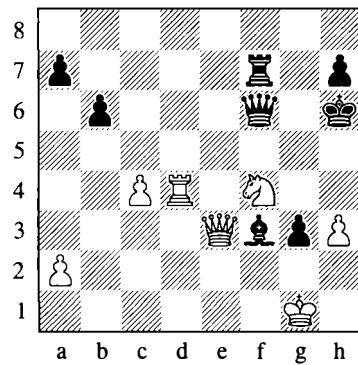


This can be refuted by the very human 46.♘f4† ♔h4 47.♘g2†, protecting the queen before taking the black queen, or instead by a mating attack: 46.♞d5† ♔g6 47.♞e4† ♔f7 48.♞xh7† ♔xe6 49.♞g8† ♞f7 (49...♞f7 50.♞xc8† ♔e7 51.♞d8† ♔e6 52.♞d6#) 50.♞g4† ♔f6 51.♞g5† ♔e6 52.♞e5#

For this reason the only move is 45...♞f7!!, preventing the knight check.



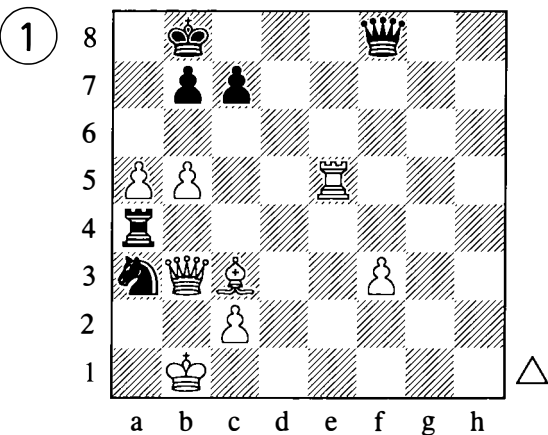
And after 46.♞d4 ♙xf3 47.♘f4† ♔h6 Black's position might look exceptionally dodgy, but it is all an illusion.



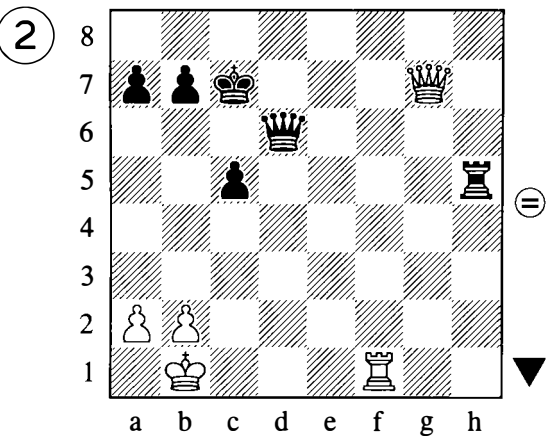
White has nothing better than a perpetual check.

Elimination is a great tool when you have many options and it is likely several of them do not work. Used incorrectly it can lead to poor decisions, but used properly it can solve problems that might otherwise seem entirely impossible.

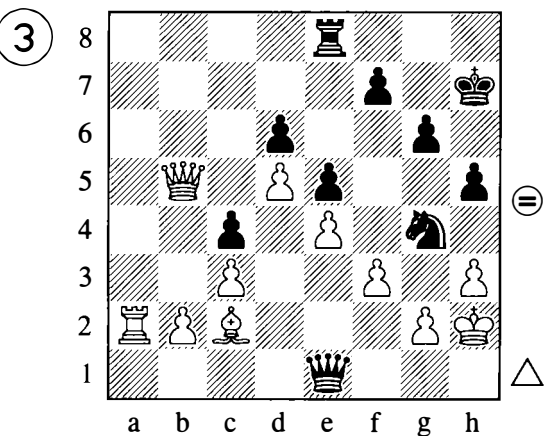
Leko – Gashimov, Elista 2008



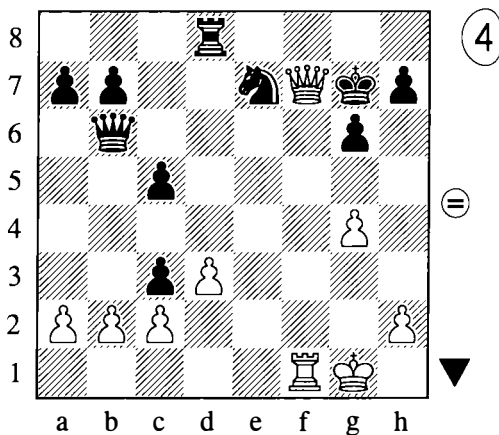
Lubbe – Seger, Bonn 2011



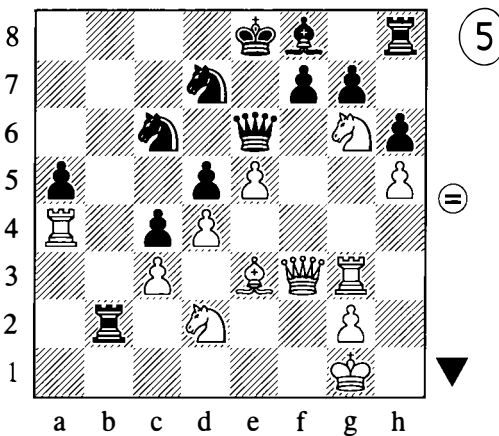
Kanak – Koitka, Poland (var) 2011



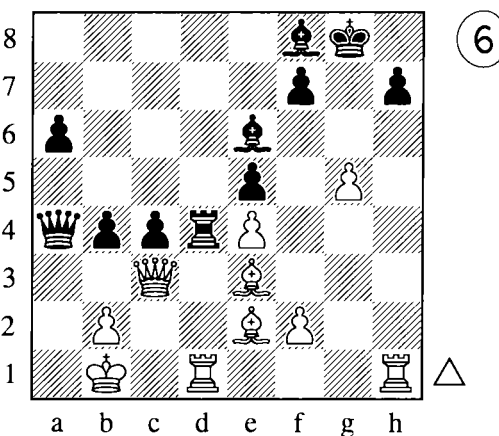
Narciso Dublan – Blomqvist, Barcelona 2011



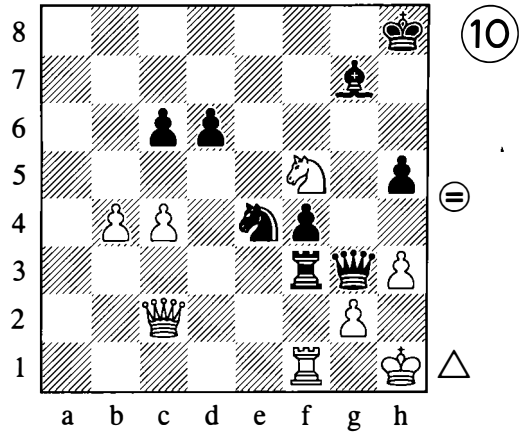
Ni Hua – Cori, Moscow 2012



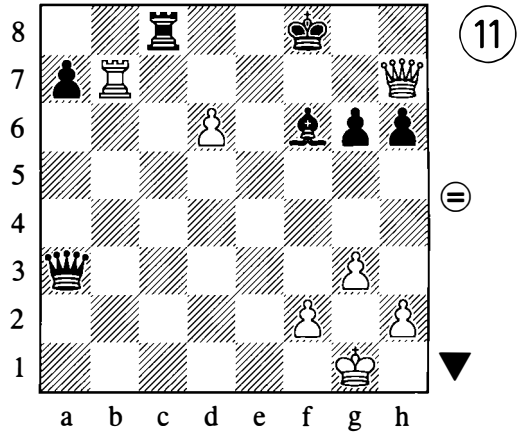
Stellwagen – Kikkert, Netherlands 2010



Neverov – Y. Vovk, Alushta 2011



Ivanchuk – Gelfand, Monaco (rapid) 2011



Bok – Kazhgaleyev, Wijk aan Zee 2011

1. Leko – Gashimov, Elista 2008

45.♔a2? ♖xb5! is the main point to spot. Noticing that **45.♔c1?** can be answered by 45...♟f4! is by itself enough to eliminate the move. But we can analyse further and see that 46.♔d1 ♟xf3! 47.♞e2 ♟f1! 48.♞e1 ♟xb5 results in a draw, just to make sure.

So the correct move is: **45.♔a1!** ♞f4 45...♞h4 46.b6 gives White a winning attack. **46.♔a2?!** Missing a number of direct wins. For example, 46.♞g5! was stronger: 46...♟e7 47.♞g8! ♞f8 48.♞xf8! ♟xf8 49.♔b2 and the knight is trapped. **46...♔c4 47.♞h5 ♞xf3 48.b6! cxb6 49.axb6 ♔xb6 50.♞b5?!** Continuing to miss the easy wins. 50.♞e5! with the idea 50...♔a7 51.♞c7! ♞xb3 52.♞a5# won immediately. **50...♔d7?!** 50...♞xc3 51.♟xc3 ♟d6 would have offered a lot more resistance. **51.♞xb7! ♔c8 52.♞xd7 ♔xd7 53.♟b7! ♔e6 54.♟c6! ♟d6 55.♟xf3 ♟a6! 56.♔b1 ♟b6! 57.♞b2 1–0**

2. Lubbe – Seger, Bonn 2011

37...♔c6? 38.♞f6 just loses the queen, because the white king can hide on a3: 38...♞h1! 39.♔c2 ♞h2! 40.♔b3 ♞h3! 41.♔a4 ♞h4! 42.♔a3 ♞h3! 43.b3 and wins.

That leaves the only move: **37...♟d7! 38.♟g3!** 38.♞f7 is no better. The white king cannot make it to a4 this time around, meaning it is impossible for him to reach a3. 38...♞h1! 39.♔c2 ♞h2! 40.♔c3 ♞h3! 41.♔c4 ♞h4! with a draw. The c5-apple is so full of poison that it is leaking out through the teeth marks... **38...♟d6 39.♞f7! ♔c6 40.♟xd6! ♔xd6 41.♞xb7 a5** A draw was agreed on move 59.

3. Kanak – Koitka, Poland (var) 2011

After **42.fxg4?** hxg4! 43.hxg4 ♞h8 White loses immediately.

42.hxg4! Clearly the only choice. **42...hxg4!?** A trap. White must now take on e8 and secure the draw, as after **43.♞a1? ♟h4! 44.♔g1 g3 45.♟b6** Black has a lovely move. **45...♟h6!! 46.♞e1!** The only defence. 46.♟a7? is refuted beautifully with: 46...♞e7!! 47.♟xe7 ♟h2! 48.♔f1 ♟h1! 49.♔e2 ♟xg2! 50.♔d1 ♟xf3! 51.♔c1 ♟f1! 52.♔d2 ♟f2! 53.♔c1 g2 and Black wins. **46...♟d2 47.♟e3 ♟xc2 48.f4 ♟d3**

4. Narciso Dublan – Blomqvist, Barcelona 2011

23...♔h6? This loses directly to a tempting attacking move. **24.g5! ♔h5** After 24...♔xg5 25.♟xe7! ♔h6 26.♞f7 White has a deadly double threat. **25.♟f3! ♔xg5** No better is 25...♔h4 26.♟g3! ♔h5 27.♞f4 with mate to follow. **26.♟e3! 26.♟g3! ♔h5 27.♟h3! ♔g5 28.♟e3! ♔h5** is just a transposition. **26...♔h5 27.♟h3!** The immediate 27.♞f7! transposes to the game. **27...♔g5 28.♟e3! ♔h5 29.♞f7! h6 29...♞h8 30.♞xe7 (30.h4!?) 30...♟f6 (30...c4 31.♞e5! g5 32.♞xg5! ♔h6 33.d4 and White wins) 31.♞e5! g5 32.♟e2! and White wins the queen. 30.♟f3! ♔g5 31.h4! Black is mated. 1–0**

This example is a typical example of elimination. It should not be hard to quickly work out the above and look elsewhere for green pastures for the king. **23...♔h8! 24.♟xe7** This also looks deadly, for example 24...♟d6 25.♞f8!, winning the queen. But once you look a bit deeper, you will surely see that **24...c4! 25.♔g2 ♟c6! 26.♔h3 ♟e8** avoids immediate mate. Actually the position is equal.

5. Ni Hua – Cori, Moscow 2012

28...fxg6? This simply loses, even though it may look like the only serious move. The alternative

28...♙g8? is easily eliminated by 29.♖f4!. 29.♙xg6 ♗f7 30.♗xf7† ♕xf7 31.♙xc6 White is just winning here. It is hard to see why Black would go for this. 31...♙b6 32.♙c7 ♕e6 33.♙xa5 ♖b8 1–0

Black has to find something else. Looking around we cannot fail to spot: 28...♖b6! 29.♖xf8 White could also consider 29.♖f4 ♗f5 30.♙a1 a4∞. But 29.♙a1 fxg6! costs White a piece. After 30.♙xg6 ♗d7 31.e6 ♗e7 32.♖xc4 ♖xc4 33.♗xd5 ♗b7 34.♗xc4 ♗b5+ White has some compensation for the piece, but not enough. 29...♙xf8 30.♙a1 Now either 30...♙g8 or 30...♖e7!? offers at least equal chances for Black.

6. Stellwagen – Kikkert, Netherlands 2010

It is not too difficult to see that the queen cannot move. Black plays ...b3 or ...c3, in both cases with a winning attack. And after 25.♗xd4? exd4 26.♙xd4 c3 the white king is also torn to pieces. 25.♙xd4?! is not as bad as most other moves, but after 25...bxc3 26.♙xc3 ♙e7 White is definitely struggling for equality – which is not what he was looking for with an extra rook and three hundred and fifty extra rating points!

25.b3!! A lovely desperado punch. White opens up his king's position in order to protect it. 25...♗c6 Black has lost all his teeth. Also after 25...cxb3 26.♗b2 ♙xe4 27.♙d3 ♙f5 28.f3 White wins. Nothing can hurt the white king. 26.♗c2 ♙xe4 26...♙xd1† 27.♙xd1 c3 is the feeble attempt from the computer. After 28.♙d8 ♕g7 29.♙b8 a5 30.♙b6 ♗c7 31.♗d1 White is clearly in control. 27.f3 ♙f5 28.♙xc4 1–0

7. Ni Hua – Morozevich, Saratov 2011

The game went: 23.♙xg4?! ♖xg4 24.♗xg4 ♙bd8± White of course has the advantage here, but the position is not yet entirely clear and Black actually managed to turn things around and won the game on move 47. It is natural to consider various queen moves, but 23.♗g2? ♗e3† 24.♖b1 ♙h3! 25.♗g5 ♖g4!± leads to a mess, and 23.♗f2?! ♙h3!± is also not clear.

The above lines suggest that White's primary concern must be to prevent any Black counterplay with ...♙h3. Once you have realized this, the winning move is not so difficult. 23.♗h1! After this Black would have been in for a rough ride. 23...♙f5 After 23...♖h5 24.♙xg4 ♗e3† 25.♖b1 ♖g3 26.♙f3 White ends up with an extra piece. 24.♙xf5 ♗e3† 25.♖b1 gxf5 26.♙xf5 ♖e8 27.♖e4 White is entirely winning. Here is a possible line: 27...f6 28.♖g5 ♕h8 29.♙e1 ♗d2 30.♙d5 ♗b4 31.♖xh7! ♙f7 31...♖xh7 32.♙g1 f5 33.♙d7† ♕h8 34.♗f3 ♖f6 35.♗xf5 with mate. 32.♙e4 ♗b6 33.♖f8! ♙d8 34.♖g6† ♕h7 35.♖e7+–

8. Dreev – Socko, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

In this case the move played in the game is relatively easy to refute: 34...♖f6? 35.♖xh7† ♙xh7 36.g5†! The main idea and not hard to see. White was not about to play 36.♖xh7? ♕g5±. 36...♖f5 36...♖f7 37.♖xh7 and wins. 37.♙d3†! This is the point. 37...♖e6 Or 37...e4 38.♙xc2 ♙g8 39.b3 ♙f7 40.♙d1 and White wins. 38.♖xh7 ♖xe3 39.♙e2 39.g6 was simpler, but Dreev likes to keep control. 39...♖d6 40.g6 ♖f5 41.♙d3 ♖e7 42.♙e4 ♖e6 43.♕g7 ♖c8 44.♖f8 ♖f6 45.g7 ♖e7 46.♙f5 ♖xf5 47.g8=♗ e4 48.♗d5 e3 49.♗e4 ♕g5 50.♗e5 ♕g4 51.♖e8 1–0

Black had to come up with 34...♖e7! 35.♖xh7 ♙e4! as a plausible defence. Actually it is the only option left, so he would not need to think further than this. Let the opponent decide what we need to consider next! But let us check the lines here anyway. The most dangerous try is: 36.g5! 36.♖g5?! ♙c6 gives decent counterplay. After 37.♖f3 e4 38.♖h4 ♖xe3 39.b3

(39.g5?! ♔xa4?) 39...♔e6 40.g5 ♔e8 41.g6 ♔f6 42.g7 ♔f7 Black secures the draw. Indeed, it is White who now has to prove it! 43.♔h5! ♔g8 44.♔e2 ♖f5† 45.♖xf5 ♔xf5 46.♔d1 e3 47.♔e2 ♔f4 48.♔d3 ♔g3 49.♔h7 ♔e6 50.♔f5!= 36...♖xe3 37.g6 ♖f5† 38.♔g5 ♖g7 39.♔g4 ♖e8 40.♔f5 ♔c6 41.♔h6 ♔xa4 and Black should save the game, even if he loses a piece for the g-pawn.

9. Bok – Kazhgaleyev, Wijk aan Zee 2011

54...♔h6?? Not much better is: 54...♔h8? 55.♖g4! This logical move is the most dangerous. White can now bring his king into play – and later maybe play ♖f6 with mate!?. (55.♖xf3 ♔h1† 56.♖h2 ♔d1 57.d7 also wins.) 55...♔h1† 56.♔g3 ♔d1 57.d7 b5 58.♔xf3 White wins. The knight is on its way to f6. For example: 58...♔g6 59.♔e8† ♔g8 60.♖f6 and Black loses everything. 55.♔e3†! This wins directly and so is the easiest refutation, although 55.♖g4† ♔g6 56.d7 ♔d1 57.♔b6 also wins. 55...♔g5 55...♔h5 56.♔h7# 56.♖f7† ♔g6 57.♖xg5 ♔d1 58.d7 a4 59.♖xf3 ♔f6 60.♔g5† ♔g6 61.♔e6† ♔f5 62.♔e5† 1–0

Having eliminated both king moves, 54...♔g7! is therefore the only move. We need no lines to prove it – as long as we cannot prove its immediate defects. 55.♔xg7† 55.♖xf3 ♔h1† 56.♖h2 ♔g6! and Black is at least not worse. 55.♖g4 gives Black a lot of options. In principle I prefer 55...♔g6! to bring the king out. For example, 56.♖e5† ♔h7 with a repetition. 55...♔xg7 56.d7 ♔d1 57.♔g3 ♔f6 58.♔b6 ♔xe5 59.d8=♔ ♔xd8 60.♔xd8 a4 61.♔e7! With a draw.

10. Neverov – Y. Vovk, Alushta 2011

White had to decide between two moves. Maybe you quickly eliminated one and decided to play the other. This would have been correct. Maybe you calculated a bit further, because this is training and you were interested. This would be correct too! 48.gxf3? ♔xh3† 49.♔g1 ♖g3! is absolutely devastating. Black wins the knight as 50.♖xg3 ♔d4† leads straight to mate.

48.♔xf3! ♔e1† 49.♔h2 ♖g3 49...♔e5 50.♔a2! The queen can also go to a4. There is only a minor difference – with the queen on a2, 50...♖d2 can be answered with 51.b5! with some chances of an advantage. 50...♖g3 White is now forced to make a draw; luckily it is available. 51.♔a8† ♔h7 52.♔a7† ♔g6 53.♖e7† (53.♖h4† ♔h6 54.♔g1 also holds) 53...♔f6! (Black should be a bit careful: 53...♔g5?! 54.♔g1! ♔e4 55.b5!±) 54.♖g8† With perpetual check. 50.♖xg3? 50.♔xg3! ♖g3† 51.♖xg3 was forced. White now secures a draw after either 51...♔e5 52.♔g6! or 51...h4 52.♖f5 ♔e5† 53.g3 with level chances. 50...♖xg3† 51.♔xg3 ♔d4! A cold shower. White has to give up the rook for nothing, just to play a few more moves. 52.♔g8† ♔xg8 53.♔g6† ♔g7 54.b5 ♔e5† 55.g3 ♔xb5 56.♔xb5 ♔f8 57.h4 ♔e2† 58.♔h3 ♔d1 59.♔f5† ♔e7 60.♔e4† ♔e5 61.♔h7† ♔d8 62.♔g8† ♔c7 63.♔c4† ♔b6 64.♔c6† ♔a5 65.♔a8† ♔b4 66.♔e4† ♔c5 67.♔c6† ♔d4 68.♔b6† ♔d3 0–1

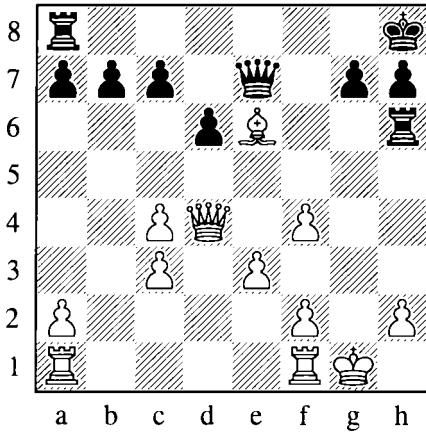
11. Ivanchuk – Gelfand, Monaco (rapid) 2011

The game concluded: 31...♔a1? 31...♔a2? 32.♔xh6† wins immediately. 32.♔g2 ♔g7 Now White has a very nice winning move in 33.♔b4!, which admittedly could have been very hard to see. But Gelfand will definitely have been disappointed to have missed the winning sequence that White did play. 33.♔xg6 ♔f6 34.♔xg7! Black resigned, in view of 34...♔xg7 35.♔f5†. 1–0

Instead Black should have returned the queen to the defence with: 31...♔c1†! 32.♔g2 ♔c6† 33.♔h3 ♔e8! 34.♔xh6† ♔g8 where White should seriously consider taking the perpetual check. After something like 35.f3!? Black can play 35...♔c5, or 35...♔d8 with the idea ...♔d7, and White cannot do better than perpetual check.

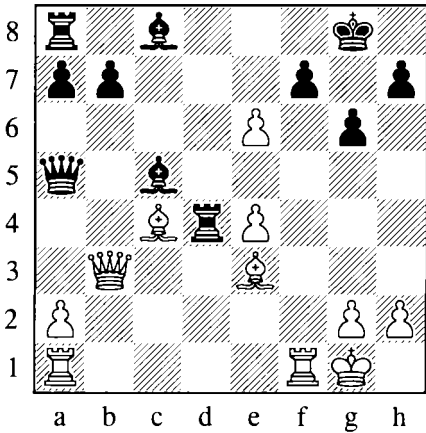
Volodin – Miezis, Tallinn (rapid) 2011

12



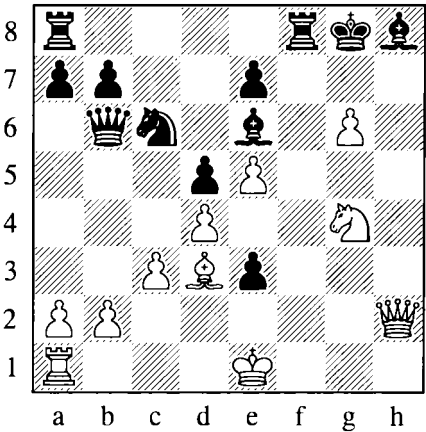
L'Ami – Harika, Wijk aan Zee 2012

13



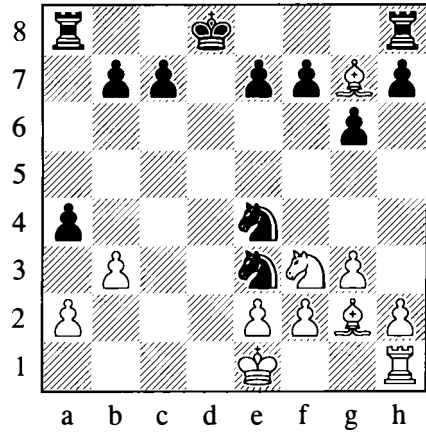
Mamedyarov – Mamedov, Moscow (blitz) 2010

14



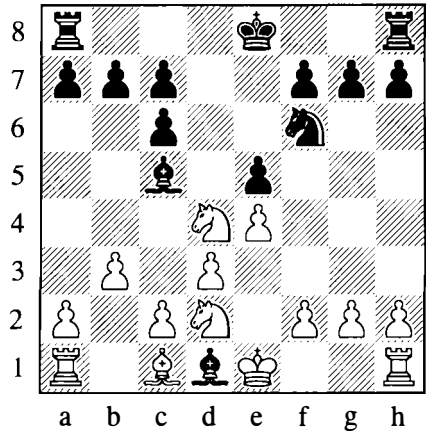
Radjabov – Navara, Wijk aan Zee (var) 2012

15



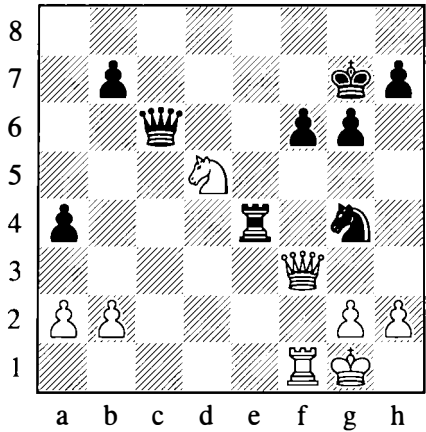
McShane – Kramnik, London (var) 2011

16



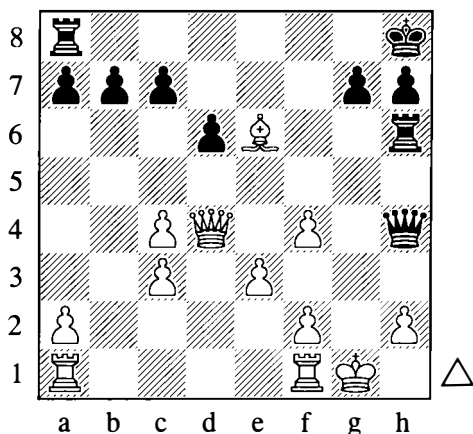
Kryakvin – Matlakov, Taganrog 2011

17



12. Volodin – Miezis, Tallinn (rapid) 2011

Black has two tempting options. He can either recapture on e6 with the queen or he can throw in ...♖h4 before recapturing with the rook. In the game he did the latter and was immediately successful. **21...♖h4?**



22.h3?? Instead of this rather compliant move, White had two ways to secure an equal game: 22.♖g2 ♜xe6 23.♜g1! ♜g6† (23...b6 24.♖h1! and White looks better, despite Black having some compensation.) 24.♖h1 ♜xf2 25.♜xg6 hxg6 26.♜e4 White is no worse. It also looks fine to play 22.♜fb1 ♜xh2† 23.♖f1 ♜xe6 24.♜d5!. For example: 24...♜h3† 25.♖e2 ♜g4† 26.♖d3 c6 27.♜g5 with an even endgame approaching. **22...♜xe6 23.♖g2?** This loses immediately. Preferable was 23.f5, although Black is much better after 23...♜e4 24.♜d5 c6 25.♜d3 ♜g5† 26.♖h2 ♜xf5. **23...♜g6† 24.♖f3 ♜h5† 25.♖e4 ♜e2! 26.♜a1 ♜e8† 0–1**

21...♜xe6! was the correct move. **22.f5** This is objectively best. 22.f3 is the move that my students find hardest to refute. But it should not be so difficult to see the weakening of the second rank: 22...♜g6† 23.♖h1 ♜c2! and White can resign. 22.♜fe1 ♜h3 23.♜e4 might look like a defence, but the winning idea is quite simple. The queen's position on e4 is unstable. 23...c6! (23...♜c8 also wins, with the idea 24.♜xb7 ♜g6† 25.♖h1 c6, but this is just an abstract version of the main line.) 24.♜ab1 (24.f5 ♜h4 and wins) 24...♜e6! Black wins – the white queen is out of squares. **22...♜xf5 23.♜f4 ♜h5 24.♖h1 ♖g8 25.f3 ♜f8 26.♜g3 ♜c5** With a technical win.

13. L'Ami – Harika, Wijk aan Zee 2012

17...♜xc4? 17...fxe6? is easy to eliminate: 18.♜xe6† ♖h8 19.♜f8†! (19.♜a1 is also very strong) 19...♜xf8 20.♜xd4† ♜g7 21.♜xg7† ♖xg7 22.♜b2† ♖h6 23.♜c1† ♖g7 24.♜xc8 and White has won a piece. This might seem a long line to calculate for some, but it has no real surprises, so it is definitely possible to get it right. **18.exf7† ♖f8 19.♖h1!** If Black had seen this, he would have been able to eliminate this variation quite quickly. There is no hope left. **19...♜xe3 20.♜xe3 g5 21.e5 h6 22.e6 ♜xe6 23.♜xe6 ♜c6 24.♜e4 ♜c3 25.♜a1 ♖g7 26.f8=♜† 1–0**

The above means that **17...♜xe4!** was the only playable move. **18.exf7† ♖f8** Here there is no direct win, which is already reason enough to choose this variation! **19.♜xc5†** Or 19.♜f2!? ♜f5 20.♜d5 ♜e5 21.♜xb7 ♜b8 22.♜f3 ♜xf2† 23.♜xf2 h5 and Black is okay. **19...♜xc5† 20.♖h1**

♖xc4 21.♖b2 ♜f4! Preparing to take the pawn with the king. Black can also draw with 21...♜d4 22.♜ad1 ♜f4, but why give up the tempo? However, 21...♖d4? 22.♜ad1! would be unfortunate, and is maybe what made Black choose not to go down this road. **22.♖h8† ♔xf7** White only has a draw by perpetual check.

14. Mamedyarov – Mamedov, Moscow (blitz) 2010

White's threat is rather obvious and so is the measure against it – Black has to move his f8-rook. **20...♜f7?** 20...♜fc8? and other rook moves along the 8th rank fail to just about every idea under the sun, most prominently 21.♖h7† ♔f8 22.♖xh8† ♙g8 23.e6! with mate to follow. 20...♜f3? looks like another obvious move. However, here White has a win based on a clever tactical point: 21.♖h7† ♔f8 22.♖xh8† ♙g8 23.e6 (23.♔e2!? ♜f4 24.g7† also wins, but this is cleaner.) 23...♔e8 24.♔e2!! The black rook is embarrassingly out of squares. After 24...♜f4 25.♔xe3 the rook is simply trapped and White wins. 20...♜f4? leaves the rook where we can take it. As this is not a good idea (Black would have ...♖xb2+ in reply), White simply plays 21.0–0–0! and has a completely winning position. The immediate threats are ♖xf4 or ♖h7† with a winning attack. And after 21...♜xg4 22.♜f1 mate is near. 20...♜f2? is quite an amusing try, but it fails to 21.♖h7† ♔f8 22.♖xh8† ♙g8 23.e6! ♔e8 24.♔xf2 and White will win everything, as well as queen the g-pawn in the end. **21.gxf7† ♔xf7** 21...♙xf7 22.♖h7† ♔f8 23.♖xh8† ♙g8 24.♙g6 gives Black no reasonable defence against 25.♖h6#, as after 24...e6 25.♖f6† he is mated all the same. **22.♖h5†!** Keeping the king in the cage. The fight is nearing its conclusion. **22...♔g8 23.♖h7† ♔f8 24.♖xh8† ♙g8** Black resigned. After 25.♙g6! it is mate in two more moves. **1–0**

So by the method of elimination, the only playable move was **20...♜f1†!**, to win a much needed tempo and ruin White's coordination. **21.♔xf1** 21.♙xf1?! is even worse. After 21...♙g7 Black is winning. The threat of simply ...♙xg4 ruins White's chances of establishing a quick attack. **21...♙g7 22.♔g1 ♔f8!** The king needs to get out of there quickly. **23.♜f1† ♔e8 24.♔f6† ♔d8 25.♖h7 ♖xb2** Black has the advantage in this undoubtedly complex position. If it is winning or just good is a deep discussion which is irrelevant to our process of elimination.

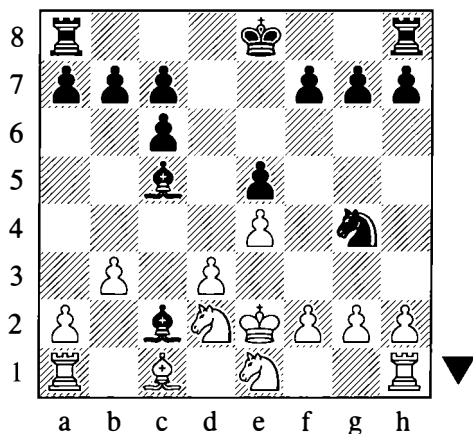
15. Radjabov – Navara, Wijk aan Zee (var) 2012

17.♙xh8? has to be eliminated on account of **17...axb3! 18.axb3?** Continuing to fall for the trap. After 18.fxe3 f6! 19.0–0 b2! Black has the advantage. 20.♔g5!? ♔xg5 21.♙xb7 ♜b8 22.♜d1† ♔e8 23.♙c6† ♔f8 24.♜b1 ♔f7 25.a4 ♔xh8 26.a5 ♜b3! and it is Black who is playing for a win. **18...f6!** After this White is mated in a few moves. Instead 18...♔xg2†? 19.♔f1 ♔e3† 20.fxe3 f6 21.♔g2 is at best equal, at worst slightly better for White.

So the correct move is: **17.fxe3! axb3 18.axb3!** and it is actually Black that has to prove equality. **18...♜g8 19.♙d4 c5 20.♔e5 cxd4 21.♙xe4 ♜a1† 22.♔f2 ♜xh1 23.♙xh1 dxe3† 24.♔xe3 f6 25.♔d3 ♔c7=**

16. McShane – Kramnik, London (var) 2011

Both players considered this position during the game. McShane believed he could play **9.♔d4f3?** forcing Black to take on f3, but that is not the case. **9...♙xc2! 10.♔e2 ♔g4 11.♔e1!** Better is 11.♙b2 0–0–0 12.♔e1 ♔xf2 13.♔xc2 ♔xd3+ and maybe McShane would have played this had he reached this position.

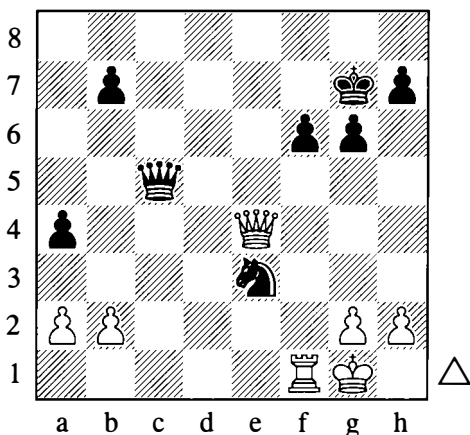


But in advance he had planned the text move, which loses after 11...♙d1†!!.

But Kramnik saw further, correctly realizing that White should play 9.♘f3! with even chances, as Black ends up struggling after: 9...♗g4?! 10.♙xd1 ♘xf2† 11.♙e2 ♘xh1 12.♘f5 g6 13.♘h6 ♘f2 14.♙e3 ♙xe3 15.♙xe3±

17. Kryakvin – Matlakov, Taganrog 2011

White's first two moves are clearly forced, but what next? 29.♙xe4 ♙c5† 30.♘e3 ♙h1? ♘f2† 31.♙xf2 ♙c1† would be embarrassing. 30...♘xe3

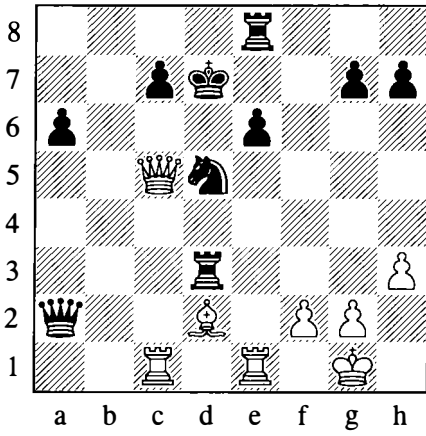


31.♙xb7†? 31.♙e1? ♘g4† is obviously hopeless and 31.♙f3? ♙c1† 32.♙f2 ♙d2† is also catastrophic. For example: 33.♙g3 ♙xg2† 34.♙f4 ♙g5# 31...♙h6 White now has to return the exchange and suffer. 32.h3 ♘xf1† 33.♙xf1 ♙c4† 34.♙g1 ♙xa2♣ Black has an extra pawn and converted it on move 61. ...0–1

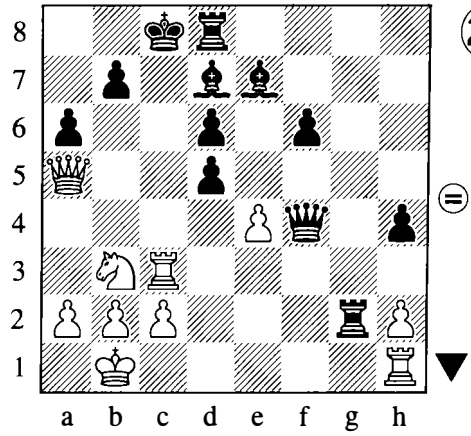
31.♙f4!! is the only move. The key idea is that White would like to meet 31...♘g4† with 32.♙d4!, when he would be winning. Black can play something like 31...b5!?, here, when he would have compensation, but nothing more. However, the critical move is 31...g5 forcing a draw after 32.♙xb7† ♙g6 33.♙e4† f5!? 34.♙e6† ♙g7 35.♙d7† ♙h6 36.♙e6† and so on...

Giri – Bawart, Rogaska Slatina 2011

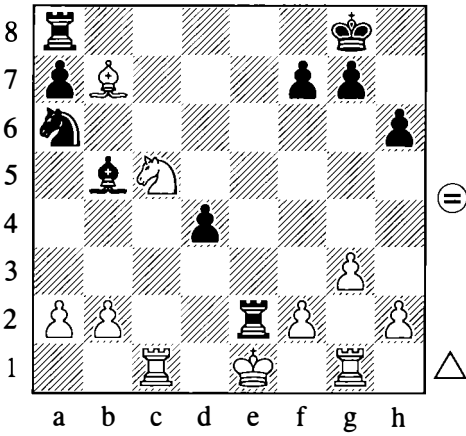
18

**Hector – Sutovsky, York 1999**

20

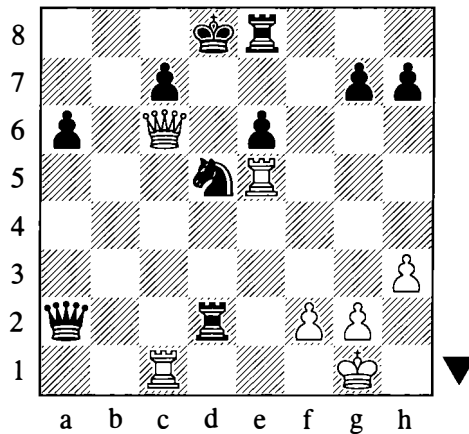
**Nyzhnyk – Harikrishna, Wijk aan Zee 2012**

19



18. Giri – Bawart, Rogaska Slatina 2011

30...♞xd2? This should have been eliminated. **31.♞c6† ♕d8** Here it is not too hard to see the only active move for White: **32.♞e5!**

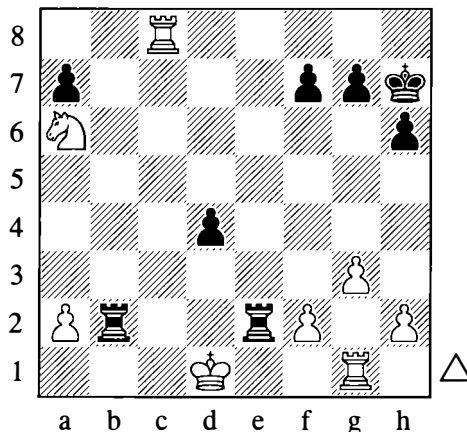


With the threat of ♞xd5†. White sets up a perpetual check on a8 and c6. **32...♞a5 32...♞f8 33.♞xe6 ♞d3 34.♕h1!** looks risky for Black. The only move is **34...♞a3**, when after **35.♞xd5† ♞xd5 36.♞xd5† ♞d6 37.♞g5† ♞f6 38.♞d1† ♕e7 39.♞d5 ♞e6 40.♞c5† ♕f7 41.♞xc7† ♕g8 42.♞d7** Black will draw. But why suffer just to get to here? **33.♞a8† ♕d7 33...♕e7? 34.♞xe6† ♕xe6 35.♞xe8† ♕e7** does not work, as **36.♞e1†** just wins. **34.♞c6† ♕d8 35.♞a8† ♕d7 36.♞c6† ♕d8 37.♞a8† ½–½**

30...♞xd2! would have won the game. **31.♞c6† ♕d8 32.♞a8† 32.♞e5** is most easily answered with **32...♕c3** winning. **32...♕e7 33.♞xe6† ♕xe6 34.♞xe8† ♕e7** Compared with the similar variation we saw above, here the queen is protecting the e1-square. **35.♞c6† ♞d6 36.♞xc7 ♞g5** The extra piece makes all the difference.

19. Nyzhnyk – Harikrishna, Wijk aan Zee 2012

21.♕d1? ♞b8! Did White not expect this? And if not, what else did he expect? **22.♙xa6 ♙xa6 23.♙xa6 ♞bxb2 24.♞c8† 24.♞a1 ♞xa2** and Black wins the rook ending. **24...♕h7**

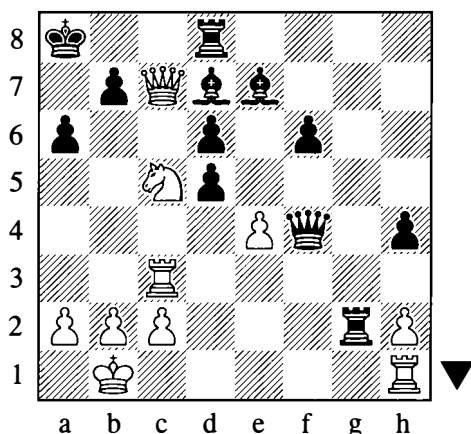


At this point it was definitely possible to realize that White has no chances of winning here, but every chance of losing. **25.♖b4?** 25.♖b8 was objectively better, but Black is to be favoured after 25...♖bd2† 26.♗c1 ♖xa2 27.♜c5 ♖ac2† 28.♗d1 ♖ed2† 29.♗e1 ♖xf2 and it is very likely that White is lost. **25...♖xf2 26.a3 a5 27.♜d5 ♖a2 28.♖e1 d3 0–1**

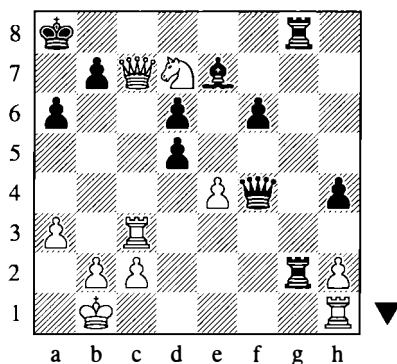
The position after **21.♗f1 ♖xb2† 22.♗g2 ♜xc5 23.♙xa8 ♜d3** is certainly complicated. But it does not give the impression of being bad in any way. White actually equalizes after almost anything, but most simply with: **24.♖c8† ♗h7 25.♙e4† g6 26.♖f1!?** 26.♙xd3 ♙xd3 27.♖e1 ♙e2! and Black is no worse. **26...♖xa2 27.♖c7 ♜e5 28.♖d1 d3 29.♙d5 ♖e2 30.♙xf7 ♗h8** with a sort of dynamic equality.

20. Hector – Sutovsky, York 1999

Again we have one of those positions where you are in trouble no matter what you do, but the method of elimination gives you a hope of salvation. **25...♗b8? 26.♖c7† ♗a8** McShane pointed out that **26...♗a7 27.♜a5 ♖b8 28.♖b3 ♙b5 (28...♙c8 29.♜c6†) 29.♖xb5 axb5 30.♜c6†** is terminal. **27.♜c5!!**



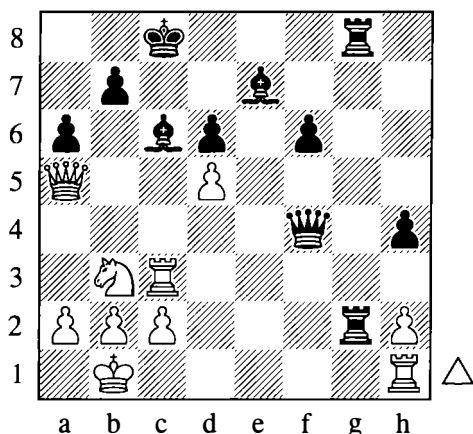
This is the move you would need to see in advance. **27...♙c6!?** White is also doing very well after **27...♖b8 28.♜xd7 ♖bg8 29.a3!** securing the king before finalizing the attack.



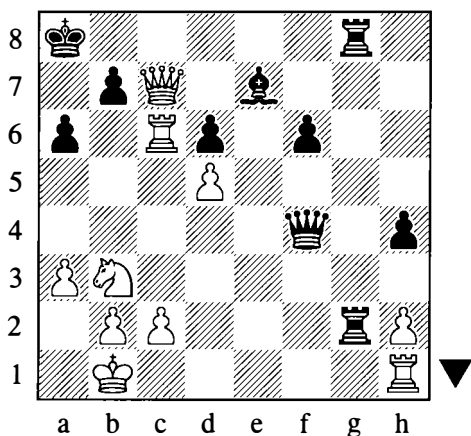
Black is just lost on account of the threat of ♖c6!! For example: **29...♖xe4 30.♖c6! ♖e2 31.♖c1** Now ♖b6 is the threat. **31...♖g1 32.♖xg1 ♖xg1† 33.♗a2 ♖g8 34.c4!** Black will be mated.

27...♙c8? is mated by 28.♜xa6! bxa6 29.♞b3. The computer considers that Black's best chance to defend at this point is 27...dxc5 28.♞xf4 ♞g4 29.♞c7 ♞xe4, although White obviously has the advantage after 30.a3, 30.♞g1 or even 30.♞xc5! ♞c8 31.♞xc8† ♙xc8 32.♞xc8† ♜a7 33.c3±. **28.♞a3! dxc5** Sadly forced. **29.♞xf4+–** White won on move 47. ...**1–0**

Black therefore had to play: **25...♙c6! 26.exd5 ♞dg8** Counterplay is essential.



27.♞xc6†! The most dangerous. 27.♞b6 is met most simply with 27...♞f2 and White obviously does not have any advantage. 27.♞c1? ♙d8! would even swing the pendulum towards White and he would have to duck and dive. **27...♜b8** 27...bxc6?! 28.♞xa6† ♜d7 29.♞xc6† ♜d8 was given as drawing by Luke McShane back in 2000. But with today's tools we can see that White keeps some initiative with 30.♞e1!. Still the outcome cannot be said to be decided – although I favour White. **28.♞c7† ♜a8** Here White can take a draw with 29.♞xa6† or do as Hector would undoubtedly have done, initiate wild complications after **29.a3!**



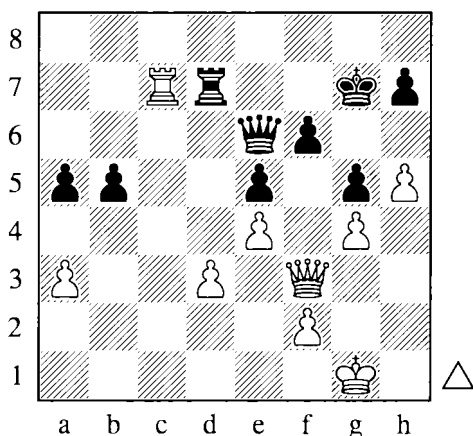
29...♞2g7! The only move. **30.♞e1 ♙d8!** The best chance. 30...bxc6?! might not look so clear, but the attack after 31.♜a5 ♙d8 32.♞c8† ♜a7 33.♜xc6† ♜b6 34.♜b4!± is very strong and human intuition – or deep analysis – could warn Black that life would be very hard indeed. **31.♞xd6 ♞xd6 32.♞xd6 ♙c7 33.♞xf6 ♙xh2** White has the advantage in this ending, but the bishop is strong and the h-pawn offers real chances of survival.

Chapter 6

Intermediate Moves

Jacob Aagaard – Jonathan Rowson

Hamilton 2004



White to play

This position is from the tournament where I got my second GM norm. I started excellently with $5\frac{1}{2}/6$ and had a full point lead. I then sailed towards the norm with three draws while Jonathan won his last three games, taking the first prize. Happiness for both, you might say.

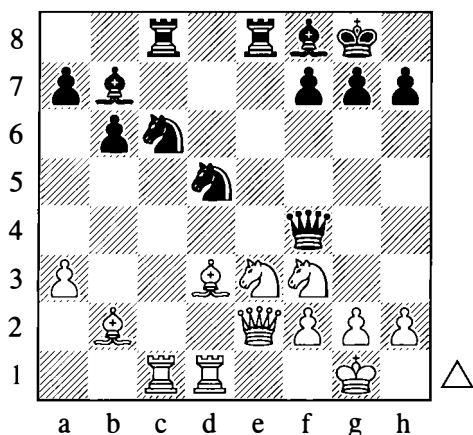
I would not quite say that this was the case with this game. Jonathan clearly considered himself to be the better player and was out to beat me, but in the end I had the only serious chance to win the game. Unhappiness for both, if you have to ask...

There are a few tactical themes that could have been included in this book without seeming out of place. The desperado is an obvious one to name. But desperado scenarios are relatively rare and do not fit in a small list of calculation techniques. However, almost all complicated tactical games include some kind of intermediate moves, if not in the actual play, then at least in the heads of the players.

The idea is simple and not unlike comparison. By inserting a move at a relevant time you change the properties of the position a little bit and they are suddenly in your favour. A closely related technique, which I would rank as being in the outskirts of calculation mainstream techniques, is trying to change the move order. Sometimes they are so closely related that you cannot tell them apart. The first example is a bit like that.

Tamaz Gelashvili – Alexander Goldin

Orlando 2011



Black has just taken a pawn on d5 with the idea that 20.♖xd5? would be met with 20...♗xe2 and 21...♗xb2.

White needs to look for something else, and all he could come up with was the rather

unenergetic 20.♕xh7+! ♖xh7 21.♗xd5. After this both players made additional mistakes before Black won on move 39. At this point the best move was 21...♜g8! with even chances.

But let us try to imagine that White had spent a minute or so looking for other options, and realized that he had an opportunity to start an attack on the kingside.

20.♗c4!

This energetic move would have forced Black to enter complications, as all normal-looking moves are easily refuted.

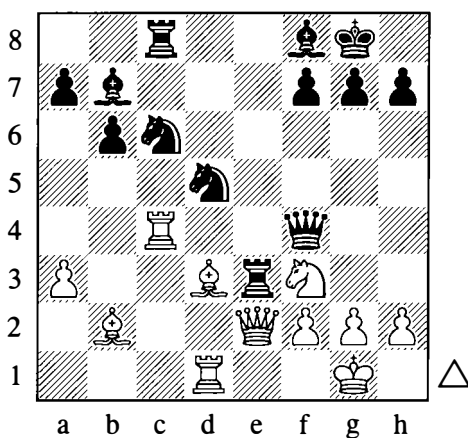
Retreating with the queen along the b8-h2 diagonal ends in disaster on the kingside after both ♕xh7+ and the less rushed, but not really less energetic ♜g5.

In sort of the same way 20...♗h6 21.♗h4 leads to immediate disaster, so with no retreats available, Black needs to push forward.

20...♗xe3!

If we continue to think that White was looking for candidate moves and saw his last move, probably he also saw that this reply was forced. But at this point he might have decided to throw out the line, as 21.fxe3 ♗xe3+ is pretty bleak. After the exchange of queens the knight will arrive on e3 and Black wins the exchange back.

But White has a better option available.



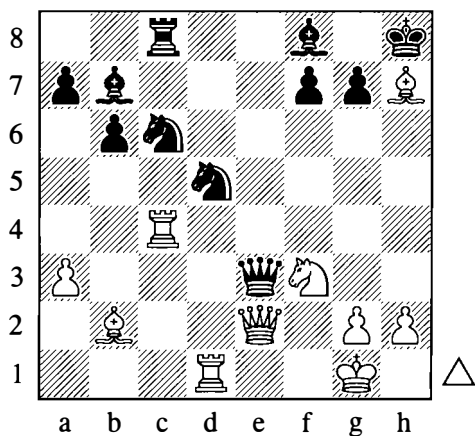
21. ♖xh7!!

You can discuss whether it is 20. ♖c4 or this that is the intermediate move. Chess is played move by move, but our way of thinking is in concepts. Here the idea is either to get the rook up to the fourth rank before executing the planned capture on h7 and recapture on d5 – or it is a planned capture on h7 with an intermediate rook swing to the fourth, forcing Black to give up an exchange?

It is all up to how you think and in this case neither way can be considered better than the other.

21... ♖h8

If Black now takes the bishop with 21... ♖xh7, then White has 22. ♖c2†, almost winning the queen. Black can resist with 22... ♖e4, but White is better: 23. ♖xe4 ♖ce7 24. ♖d3 ♖f5 25. ♖d4 ♖f4 26. ♖xf4 ♖xd3 27. ♖xd3±

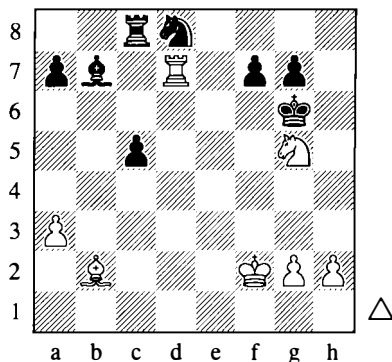
22. ♖xe3 ♖xe3†**23. ♖f2!**

This move can also easily be overlooked, but it is actually not so mysterious. Black is not allowed to put a knight on e3.

23... ♖c5

A natural move and also the best defensive try.

Whether Black takes on f2 first or plays 23... ♖xh7 24. ♖xd5 ♖xf2† does not really matter. The line is the same: 25. ♖xf2 ♖c5† 26. ♖xc5! The easiest is to return the exchange for clarity, but it is not forced. (26. ♖e1± is also quite okay, if somewhat inferior) 26... ♖xc5 27. ♖d7 ♖d8 28. ♖g5† ♖g6



29. ♖xf7! ♖xf7 30. ♖xb7±

White has good winning chances with his strongly placed rook and better minor piece. Black's drawing chances are made up by the passed pawn and the relatively small number of remaining pawns.

24. ♖xc5

This time around White does not have a choice.

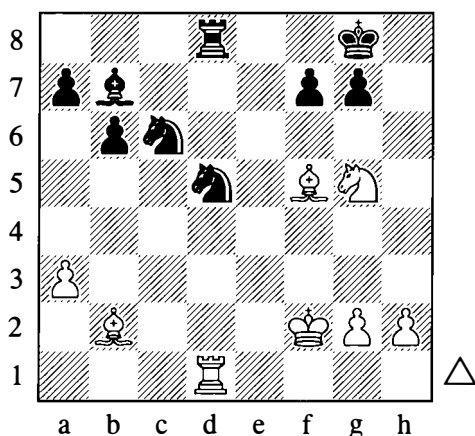
24... ♖xc5

24... ♖xc5 25. ♖xd5 transposes to 23... ♖xh7 as discussed above.

25. ♖f5!

Here there is a small yet important difference from the 23... ♖xh7 line. After 25. ♖xc5?! ♖xc5 26. ♖xd5 ♖xh7 27. ♖d7 ♖d8 28. ♖g5† ♖g6 29. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 30. ♖xb7 it would appear that we have the same position, until you notice that the king is on g1 instead of f2. Actually this difference is quite important. Black is in time to play 30... ♖d8! and generate counterplay against the white king and white bishop. Black should draw without too much hassle.

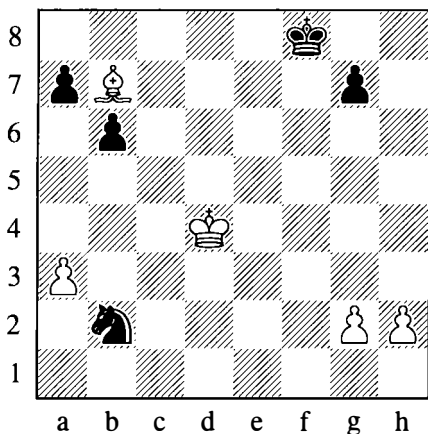
25...♖xf2† 26.♔xf2 ♜d8 27.♘g5 ♔g8



28.♘e6! fxe6

The lesser evil. After 28...♜d6 29.♘xg7± Black faces all kinds of tactical problems, not least of all the pin down the d-file.

29.♙xe6† ♔f8 30.♜xd5 ♜xd5 31.♙xd5 ♘e5
32.♙xb7 ♘d3† 33.♔e3 ♘xb2 34.♔d4



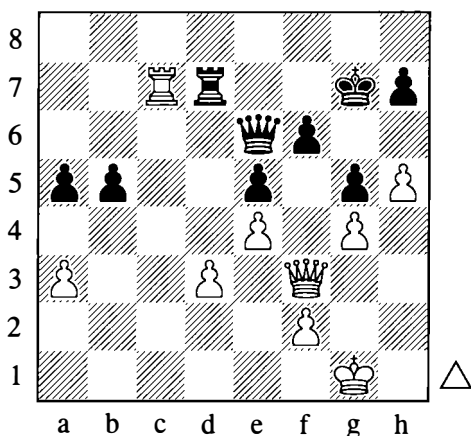
White has definite winning chances in this ending. His king is very active and he has the possibility of creating a passed pawn on the kingside. However, I still believe that the ending is within drawing limits, not least because Black can hope for an ending with a bishop and h-pawn, which White will not be able to win.

So, even though this elegant tactical idea does not lead to a forced win, it would have provided Black with great problems just to get to this unpleasant ending. In practical terms this would mean time trouble, poor defence and probably a white victory...

Intermediate moves are not that different from candidate moves in their technique. The main point is to have them on the radar and look for them at the right times. In the following game I actually considered the right move, but I was still too emotionally connected to moving my rook for me to do anything else. Basically I was a bit nervous.

Jacob Aagaard – Jonathan Rowson

Hamilton 2004



As said, I did consider giving the check with the pawn during the game, but besides the mate arising if he should take it, I did not really understand the value of it during the game.

35.h6†!

After this Black would be forced to put his king on f7 for not very complex reasons.

35...♔f7

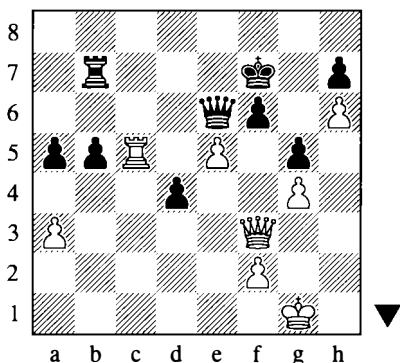
35...♔g8? for example loses to 36.♜c8† ♔f7
37.♜h8.

This does not look like an important change to the position at this point, but if we continue with the moves played in the game we shall see that it quickly becomes so.

36.♖c5 ♖b7

36...b4!? also exists, but White has no reason to worry. After 37.♖xa5 b3 38.♖b5± the extra pawn is useful and White has excellent winning chances.

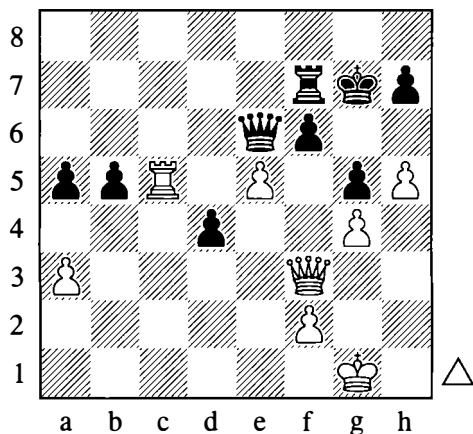
37.d4 exd4 38.e5



The black king is awkwardly placed on f7. White is simply better and will continue to be so for a long time, unless Black collapses quickly.

38...♖e7 39.exf6 ♖e4 40.♖g3±

35.♖c5? ♖b7 36.d4 exd4 37.e5 ♖f7!

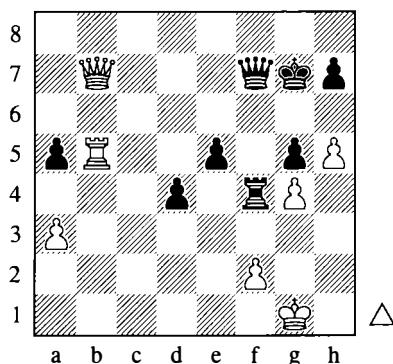


Compared to 35.h6† Black is certainly happy here. Access to the f7-square has come in quite conveniently. Importantly I never got another chance to flick in the pawn check. I should have grabbed the chance when it was there.

The game ended with a draw in not too many moves.

38.♖xb5 ♖e5 39.♖e4 ♖f4 40.♖b7† ♖f7!

The king could also retreat to g8 without any worries, but to Jonathan's credit it should be mentioned that he saw the refutation of 40...♖f7? at the board.



41.h6†!! and now either 41...♖xh6 42.♖h1†! ♖g6 43.♖b6† ♖f6 44.♖e4† ♖h6 45.♖b7 or 41...♖g6 42.♖b6† ♖f6 43.♖e4† ♖xh6 44.♖b7! and White wins in both cases.

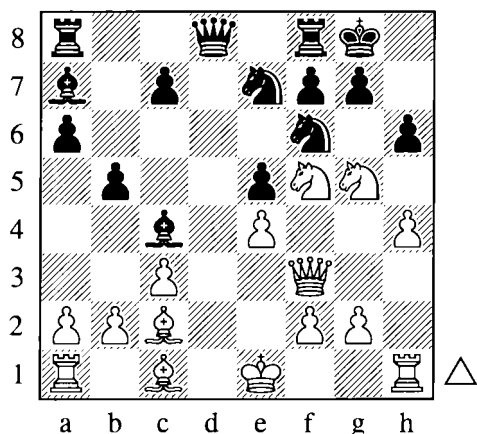
41.♖e4 ♖f4 42.♖b7† ♖f7 43.♖e4
½–½

The last example shows quite a normal scenario for intermediate moves and why it is so important to have them included as part of your training regimen.

(see diagram next page)

Kjetil Lie – Sune Berg Hansen

Porto Carras 2011



In the game White played 18.♖e3? and was outplayed gradually until he lost on move 49.

18.♖xh6†!

Obviously this is one of the first moves a grandmaster would look at, but without the right follow-up the attraction is rather limited. For example: 18...gxf6 19.♖xf6 hxf6 20.♔xg5 offers White some compensation, but Black is generally all right. And this is the case with all lines that include looking exclusively on the kingside.

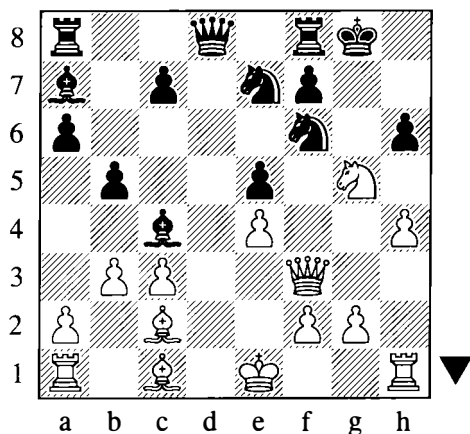
18...gxf6 19.b3!!

A very difficult move that neither of the players considered during the game. Their focus was simply elsewhere, which shows the potential power of having intermediate moves in your arsenal.

Notice that 18.b3 did not work either. Black can retreat the bishop to e6, or first take on f5 and when White recaptures with the pawn play ...♔d5.

Again there could be a discussion about whether b2-b3 or the knight sacrifice is the intermediate move. And again it would be a

bit like discussing whether it is the drums or the bass which is out of sync. The thinking is that of intermediate moves, caring about the labelling is the thinking of... well, let's just not go there.

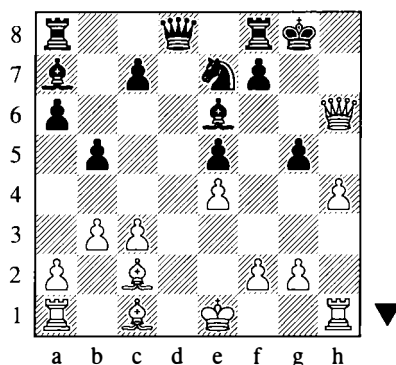


At this point Black has various options, all of them leading to a clear advantage for White. We shall look at them individually.

19...♔e6 20.♖xf6 gives White a great position.

Now 20...♖g6± is objectively best, but obviously not what Black would generally consider desirable.

The fantastic point behind the whole operation is that 20...hxf6? is met with: 21.♖h6!!

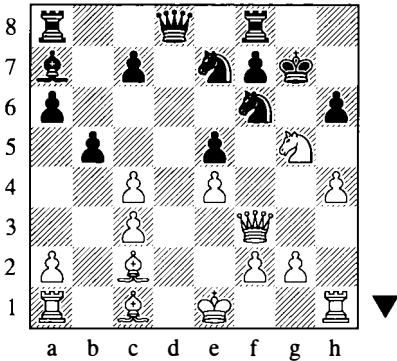


White's attack on the dark squares is tremendous and Black cannot come up

with an adequate defence. For example:
 21...g4 22.♗g5 f6 23.♗xf6 ♖xf6 24.♙xf6 ♗d7
 25.0–0–0 and White's attack is irresistible.

19...♙d6 is rather defeatist, but is probably the best move. White is more than comfortable after 20.bxc4 bxc4 21.♖h3 ♗g7 22.♖b1±, but the game continues.

19...♗g7 20.bxc4



20...hgx5?!

This also cannot be recommended.

The last chance would be 20...♙d6 21.♖h3 bxc4 22.♖b1, which transposes to 19...♙d6. White is close to winning.

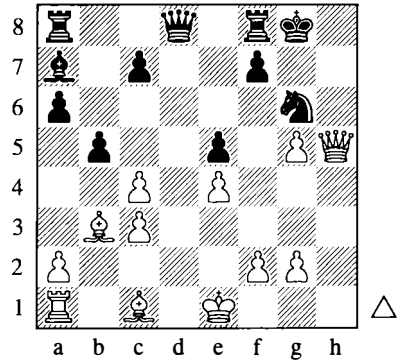
21.hgx5 ♖h7

Black is also in big trouble after 21...♖d7 22.cxb5 axb5 23.♗b3 ♖g6 24.♖h7† and White has a winning attack.

22.♗b3 ♖g6

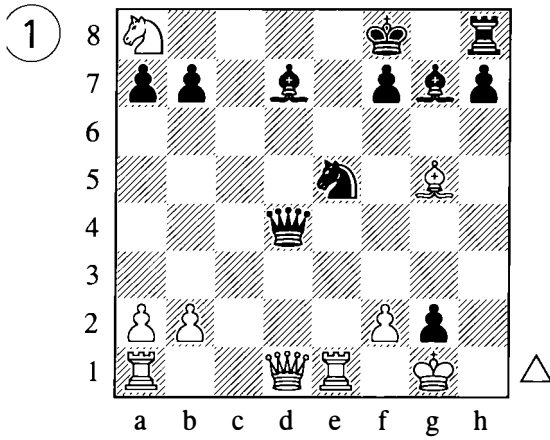
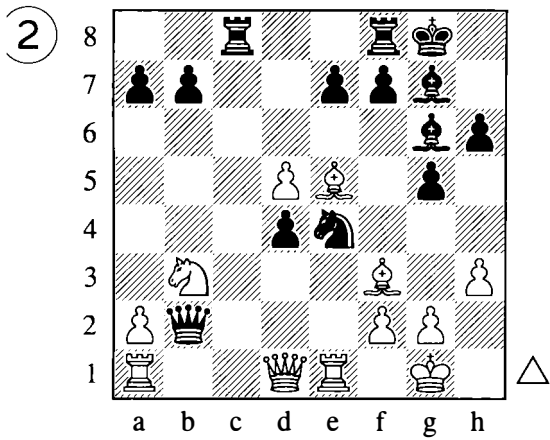
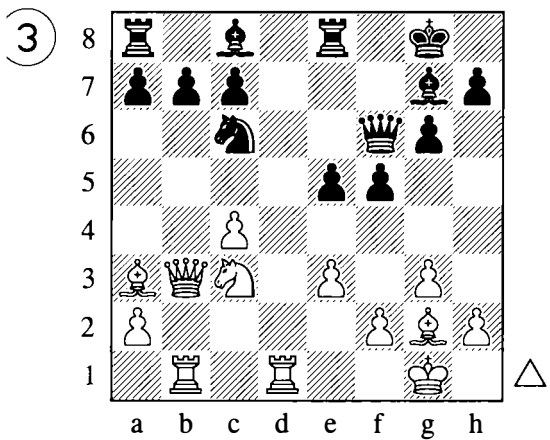
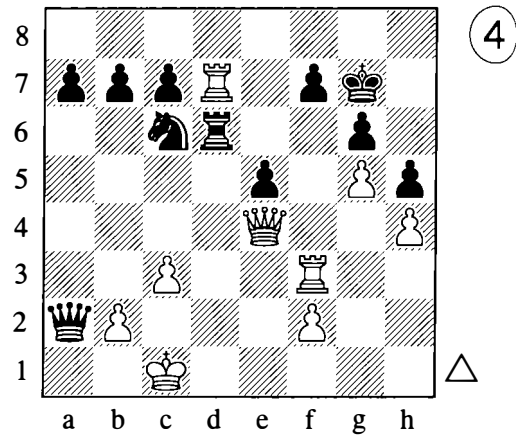
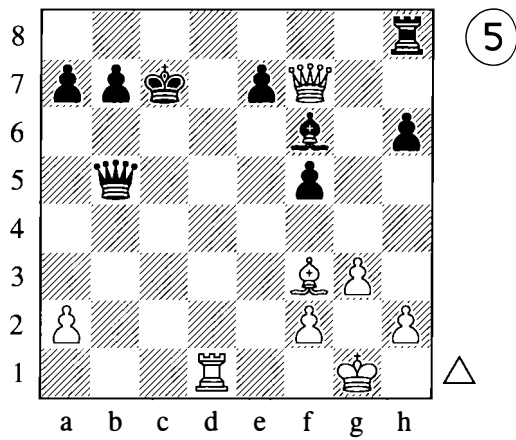
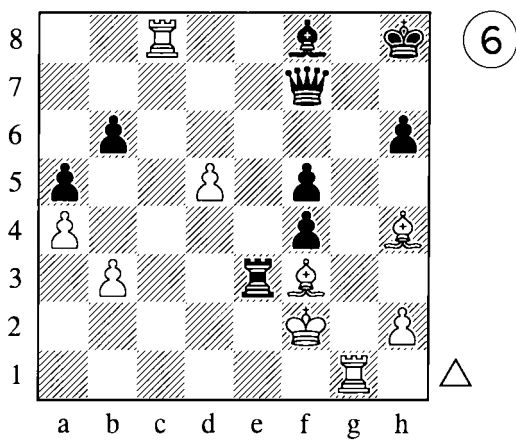
22...♙d6 23.♖h6 ♖g6 is another defensive try, but simple play with 24.cxb5 axb5 25.♗d2 and 26.0–0–0 gives a winning attack.

23.♖xh7† ♗xh7 24.♙h5† ♗g8



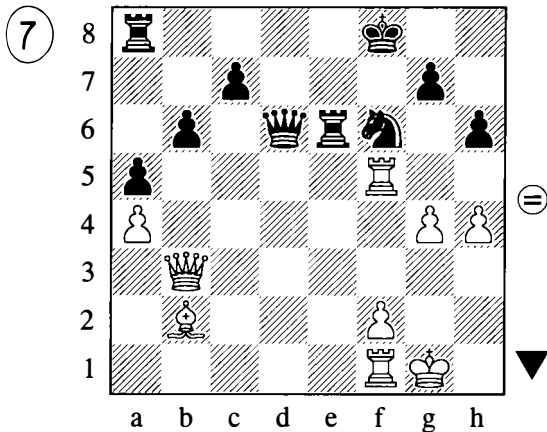
25.c5!

White wins. Notice the double effect of the last move, preventing ...♙d6 at the same time as the bishop's diagonal is opened.

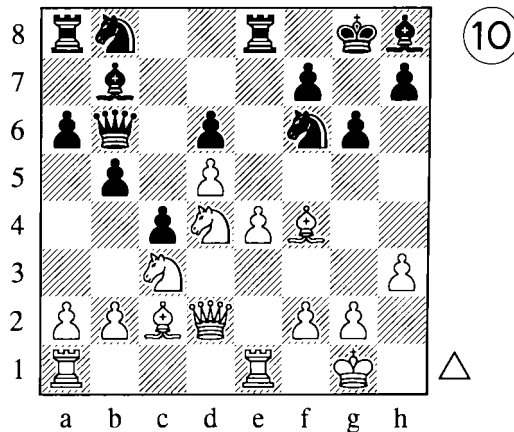
Movsesian – Caruana, Moscow (blitz) 2010**Romanov – Shirov, Warsaw (rapid) 2011****Salem – Beliavsky, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010****Mamedov – Organdziev, Plovdiv 2010****Kulaots – Fauland, Aix-les-Bains 2011****Malakhov – Bosiocic, Sibenik 2010**

Yu Yangyi – Jumabayev, Moscow 2011

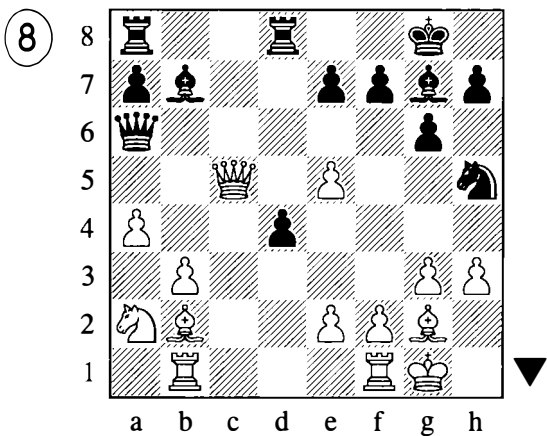
Manolache – Ardelean, Sarata Monteoru 2011



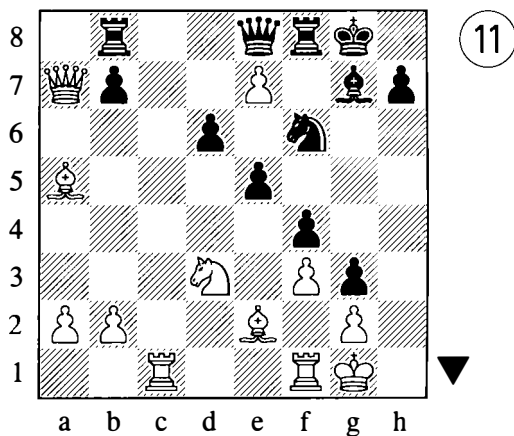
Cornette – Hamdouchi, Mulhouse 2011



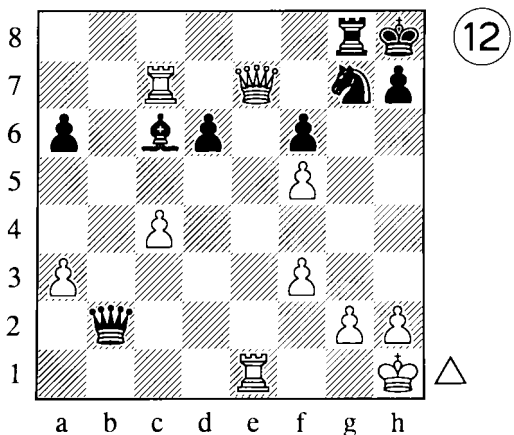
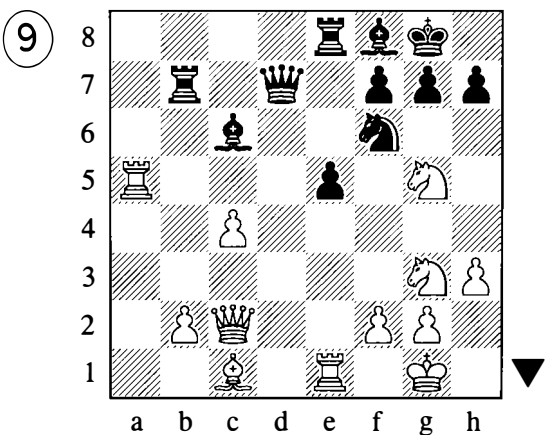
Lach – Dworakowska, Warsaw 2011



E. Berg – Adams, Gibraltar 2012



Solak – Karjakin, Dresden (ol) 2008



1. Movsesian – Caruana, Moscow (blitz) 2010

20.♙e7†! A nice intermediate move. Black cannot take the bishop as his knight would be pinned. 20.♞xe5 ♜xe5 21.♞xd7 ♞xg5 would result in a particularly murky situation. **20...♜g8 21.♞xe5!** The real point – Black loses a piece. **21...♞xe5 21...♞xe5 22.♞xd7 h5 23.♜c7 ♞h6 24.♜d5** seems to be equally hopeless. **22.♞xd4 ♜xd4 23.♞d1 ♜xf2† 1–0**

2. Romanov – Shirov, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

White missed an easy win in this rapid game after: **20.♜xe4 ♜xe5 21.♜xg6 fxg6** Here **22.♞e2!** would have decided the game instantly. Instead White played the horrific: 22.♞xe5?? ♞xf2 23.♞g4 ♞cc2 24.♜h1 ♞xg2 and had to resign. 0–1

3. Salem – Beliavsky, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010

16.♜d5†! Before attacking the c7-pawn, White throws in this little intermediate move. After 16.♜b5?! ♞f7 17.♜d5 ♜e6! Black would even be better, were it not for the strong move 18.♜d6!! leading to complications slightly favouring White. **16...♞e6 16...♜h8 17.♜b5** and **16...♜e6 17.♞xb7** are both equally hopeless. **17.♜b5 ♜e7 18.♜xe6† ♜xe6 19.♜xc7 1–0**

4. Mamedov – Organdziev, Plovdiv 2010

29.♞a4! 29.♞dxf7†! would of course give White a considerable advantage, but we should not fail to look for ways we can improve things. **29...♞d5 29...♞xa4** would allow a direct mate. Now White has won a useful tempo. **30.♞dxf7† ♞xf7 31.♞xf7 ♜xf7 32.♞b3†** White won on move 55. ...1–0

5. Kulaots – Fauland, Aix-les-Bains 2011

25.a4!! You can also call this a decoy. The thing is that White improves his position rather than immediately trying to attack the black king. **25...♞xa4** Black is lost in all cases; the queen has to give up her perfect position. 25...♞c5 26.♞b3 b6 27.♞d3! and Black is killed on the light squares. 25...♞b4 26.♞a2! shows another benefit of the pawn sacrifice. 26...♞d8 27.♞c2†! (27.♞c1†? ♜b8 28.♞b1 also wins, but after 27.♞b1?? ♞d2!= White is missing a check on g8.) 27...♞c3 28.♞xc3† ♜xc3 29.♞c1 ♞d3 30.♜e2 White wins. 25...♞b6 26.♞a2! and wins. **26.♞b1 26.♞d5** and **26.♞c1† ♜b8 27.♞b1** were other wins available. **26...♞d4 27.♞e6 1–0**

6. Malakhov – Bosiocic, Sibenik 2010

48.♜h5! A fine initial sacrifice. **48...♞xh5** Now comes an important change of direction. **49.♜f6†!** 49.♞xf8? is flawed on account of 49...♜h7 50.♞h8† ♜xh8 51.♜f6† ♜h7 52.♞g7† ♜h8 53.♞g5† ♜h7 54.♞xh5 ♜g6! ending with a drawn ending. **49...♜h7 50.♞c7†!** The real point of the exercise. The road to g7 is finally cleared. **50...♜e7 51.♞g7† ♜h8 52.♞g5† ♜xf6 53.♞xh5** White wins on points. 1–0

7. Yu Yangyi – Jumabayev, Moscow 2011

Black is in trouble, but could have saved the game with the help of a nice intermediate move: **24...♞ae8!!** In the game White was winning after: 24...♜e8? 25.♞d1! ♞e7 26.g5 hxg5 (26...♞e1† 27.♞xe1 ♞xe1† 28.♜h2 ♜g4† 29.♜g2+–) 27.hxg5 ♜h7 (27...♞e1† 28.♞xe1 ♞xe1† 29.♜h2 ♜g4† 30.♜g3 ♞g1† 31.♜h4+–) 28.♜a3 ♞e1† 29.♜h2 ♞e6 30.♞xe1 1–0 **25.g5 25.♜a3 c5**

26.g5 does not improve White's chances. Black can still force a draw with 26...♙e3, but now has the extra option of continuing the fight with: 26...♙e4!? 27.♖g3 ♜xg3† 28.fxg3 ♜xa4 29.♙c1 hxg5 30.hxg5 ♙e6 31.gxf6 gxf6 32.♙xf6† ♙xf6 33.♙xf6† ♔e7 when the endgame is quite complex. **25...♙e3!** The point. Black escapes with a perpetual check, as it is White who would have to defend after **26.♖c2?! ♜3e4! 27.♖d1! ♖b4 28.♙xf6 ♜g4† 29.♔h2 ♖e4 30.♖f3 ♜xh4† 31.♔g3 gxf6 32.♙xf6† ♔g7**

8. Cornette – Hamdouchi, Mulhouse 2011

19...♔xg3! A strong prelude to the exchange on g2. The immediate 19...♙xg2 20.♔xg2 ♖b7† 21.♔g1 is not so bad for White, although he remains uncoordinated. **20.fxg3** White can actually win a piece with 20.♔b4 ♔xe2† 21.♔h2 ♖e6 22.♙xb7, but after 22...♙xe5† the Black attack is clearly decisive. For example: 23.f4 ♔xf4 24.♔g1 ♙d6 25.♖c2 ♜ab8 26.♖e4 ♖xh3 and Black wins. **20...♙xg2** 20...♙ac8? would be a bad intermediate move. After 21.♖b5 White wins. **21.♙f2** White sort of gives up but plays on at the same time. The point of the combination was of course that after 21.♔xg2 ♖xe2† 22.♔g1 (22.♙f2?! ♖e4† just picks up the rook on b1.) Black has 22...♖e3†! with the ideas 23.♔g2 ♜ac8! and 23.♔h1 ♖xg3, both with a winning attack for Black. **21...♙xh3 22.♔b4 ♖e6 23.♔c6 ♙d7 24.♙a3 ♙e8 25.♔h2 ♙f5 26.♙d1 ♙e4 27.♔xd4 ♖xe5 28.♔f5 0–1**

9. E. Berg – Adams, Gibraltar 2012

24...h6! Black would also have the initiative after 24...♙b4?!, but White can avoid losing anything with 25.♙d1 ♖c8 26.♙a1. **25.♔f3** After 25.♔5e4 ♔xe4 White should give up the exchange with 26.♙xe4 with a poor position, as after 26.♔xe4?! ♙b4 White no longer has 27.♙d1 because of 27...♙xe4! winning a piece. **25...♙xf3 26.gxf3 ♙b4 27.♙exe5** 27.♙d1 gives Black the extra option of 27...♖xh3, when after 28.♖b5 e4! 29.fxe4 (29.♔xe4 ♔xe4 30.fxe4 ♖g4† 31.♔f1 ♖xb5 32.cxb5 ♙c5 also gives Black a winning attack. White does not lose immediately, but his position is so ruined it could be called a collection of rocks...) 29...♖xb5 30.cxb5 h5! Black has a deadly attack. **27...♙xa5 28.♙xa5 ♖xh3 29.♙d2 ♙d7 30.♙c3 ♙ed8 31.♙a1 ♔h5 32.♔xh5 ♖xh5 33.♙a5 ♙e8 34.♖a4 ♖h3 35.♖c6 ♙e6 36.♖a8† ♔h7 0–1**

10. Manolache – Ardelean, Sarata Monteoru 2011

19.♔f5! gxf5 20.♙h6 f4! The only defensive try, but not good enough. 20...♙g7 loses elementarily to 21.♙xg7 ♔xg7 22.♖g5†, while Black is completely overrun after 20...♔h5 21.♖g5† ♔g7 22.exf5, where the attack comes way too fast: 22...♙xe1† 23.♙xe1 f6 24.♖xf6 ♔d7 25.♖g5 ♙f8 26.♙e7 ♙f7 27.♔e4 and White wins. **21.♖xf4 ♔h5 22.♖h4 ♙e5** White is also winning after 22...♔g7 23.e5! (attacking h7) and 22...♔d7 23.♖xh5 ♔e5 24.♙e3 ♖c7 25.f4. **23.♙e3!** The point. White now gets f2–f4 in with a winning attack. **23...♖c7 24.f4 ♔xf4 25.♙xf4 ♔d7 26.♙e3 ♙g7 27.♙g3 ♔h8 28.♖g4 ♙g8 29.♙h6 ♙g5 30.♙xg5 1–0**

11. Lach – Dworakowska, Warsaw 2011

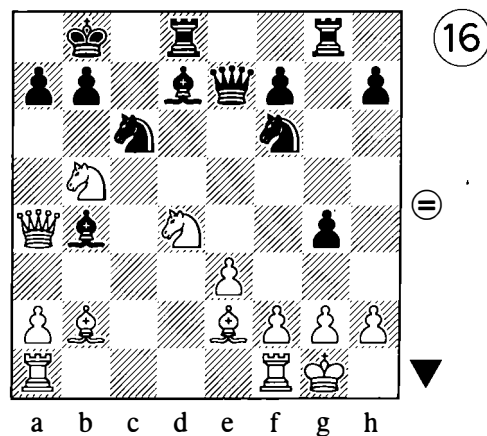
25...♖h5! A tempting sacrifice that works because of a fine detail. 25...♙a8 26.♖b6 ♖h5! transposes. **26.exf8=♖† ♙xf8!** 26...♙xf8? 27.♙fd1 would not work. Black has no big threats. **27.♙fe1** 27.♙fd1 does not change anything. **27...♙a8!** The point. The white queen does not have any good squares at her disposal. **28.♙b6?! 28.♖xa8 ♖h2† 29.♔f1 ♖h1#** Objectively the

best try was 28.♖b6!? ♘d5 29.♙d1, although after 29...♘xb6 30.♙b3† ♕h8 31.♙xb6 ♜a6! it is now the bishop which is out of squares. After 32.♙f2 ♜c6 Black should win, but there will still be a lot of play before this happens. **28...♖h2†** Black could also have decided the game with 28...♜xa7!?, with the point that 29.♙xa7 b6!! 30.♙xb6 ♘d5 would give an important tempo to play ♘e3, after which Black will win quickly. **29.♕f1 ♖h1† 30.♙g1 ♜xa7 31.♘b4 ♜a8?!** Black was probably running out of time here. 31...d5! was stronger, but Black managed to win the game on move 45 anyway. ...**0–1**

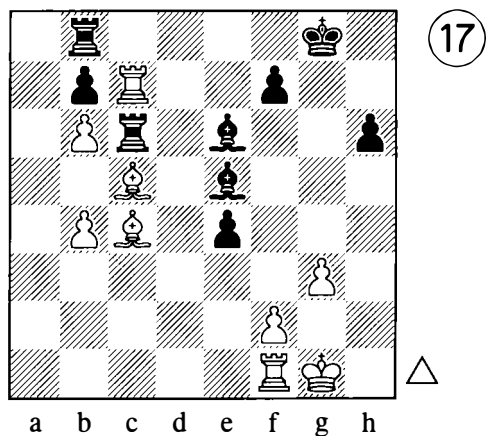
12. Solak – Karjakin, Dresden (ol) 2008

42.c5! This is stronger than the immediate 42.♜xc6?, which would be a disaster because of 42...♘xf5 with an inconvenient double threat. And following 43.♖e2 ♖xe2 44.♜xe2 ♘d4 White would have to fight for a draw in the endgame after 45.♜xd6 ♘xe2 46.♜xf6 ♜g6, and might not be successful. 42.h3? would allow Black to escape with a draw after 42...♙xf3! 43.gxf3 ♖f2 44.♖e2 ♖h4! with counterplay against h3 and a route for the knight to g3. 45.♜g1 ♖xh3† 46.♖h2 ♖xf3† 47.♖g2 ♖h5† 48.♖h2 ♖f3†= After 42.♜f1!? White would retain some advantage, but a lot of play remains. **42...dxc5** Black has nothing better. 42...♙xf3 43.gxf3 ♖f2 44.♖e2 does not work for Black this time around. **43.♜xc6 ♜e8** 43...♘xf5 can now be met with 44.♖xf6† and it is time to resign. This is the crucial improvement over 42.♜xc6. **44.♖xe8† ♘xe8 45.♜xe8† ♕g7 46.♜e7† ♕f8 47.♜e1** White is winning in this complex ending. He eventually ran short of time and made some mistakes, allowing Black to get back in the game. Final justice was served when Black blundered and lost on move 96.

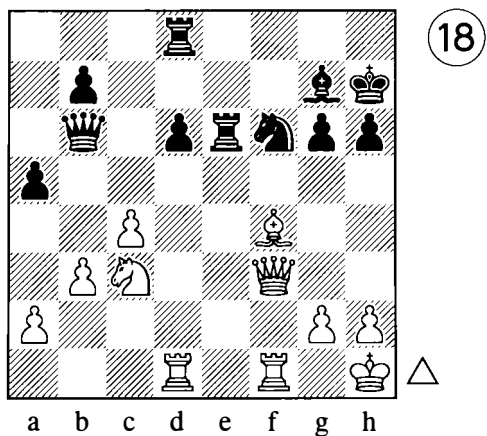
Wahlbom – Compton, Gibraltar 2011



Aagaard – Isonzo, Arco 2005



Robson – Belous, Moscow 2012



13. S. Sălov – Huschenbeth, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010

18...♙d6! would have won quickly. In the game 18...♘xa1? 19.♙xa8 ♘g4 20.♙xc8† ♙f8 21.♙f4 led to complicated play. Black erred and lost in 29 moves. 18...♙a7? 19.♙ae1 is directly winning for White: 19...♙c7 20.♘e8! and Black is mated – e.g. by ♙xf6!. **19.g3 ♙a7** Or 19...♙b8. Black is winning because of the weakness of the light squares. For example: **20.♙ae1 ♙b7** with an extra rook for Black.

14. Fedorchuk – Anton Guijarro, Madrid 2010

White is better after 19.♙xg6, but with 19...♙g4! Black would be able to put up a lot of resistance. Instead White found an intermediate move preparing the combination. **19.♙d4! ♙c4** 19...♙a5 is no better. After 20.b4 ♙a6 21.♙xg6! fxe6 22.bxc5 ♙g8 23.♙b4 White is in control, even if Black does not have to resign immediately. However, postponing death is not the same as living. **20.♙xg6 fxe6 21.♙cxc4!** A nice shot. **21...♙xc4** 21...dxc4 22.♙xg6† leads directly to mate. The black king cannot run away. **22.♙xc4 dxc4 23.♙xg6† ♘d7 24.♘d4 a6 25.f4 ♙h8 26.f5 exf5 27.e6† ♘d8 28.♘xf5 ♙f6 29.♙g8† ♙f8 30.♙h7 1–0**

15. Volkov – Miroshnichenko, Nakhchivan 2011

25.b3! White decoys the black queen, leading to a winning attack. White also has a strong attack after 25.hxg6 fxe6 26.b3 ♙xb3 27.♘g4 ♘h7 28.♙e3, but the game is far more convincing. 25.♙e3 ♙f4! would make it much harder for White to continue his attack. **25...♙xb3 26.♘g4 ♘h7 27.♙e3 ♙c4 27...gxh5 28.♙d3† ♘g8 29.♙g3** and White wins. **28.hxg6†!** Good enough to win, but it made more sense to play 28.♘h6! immediately, and win the f7-pawn if the knight is not captured. **28...fxg6 29.♘xh6 ♙f4 30.♘f7 ♘g8 31.♘h8! d4 31...♙h6 32.♙e2** and wins. **32.cxd4 cxd4 33.♙d3 ♙f5 34.♙xd4 ♙c6 35.♙g3 ♙e4 36.♘xg6 1–0**

16. Wahlbom – Compton, Gibraltar 2011

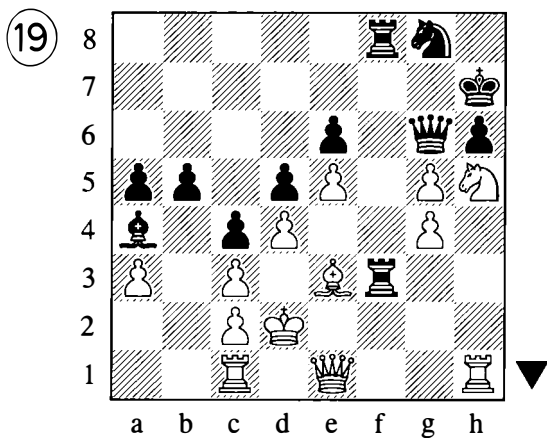
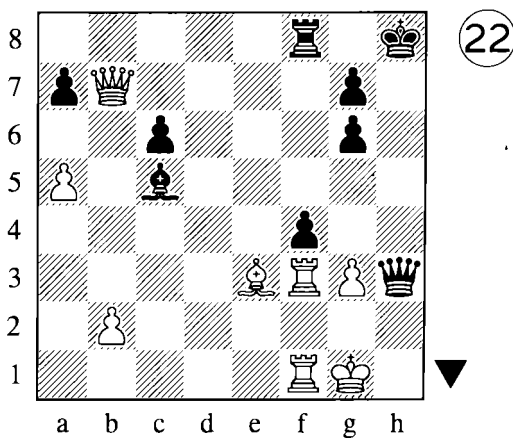
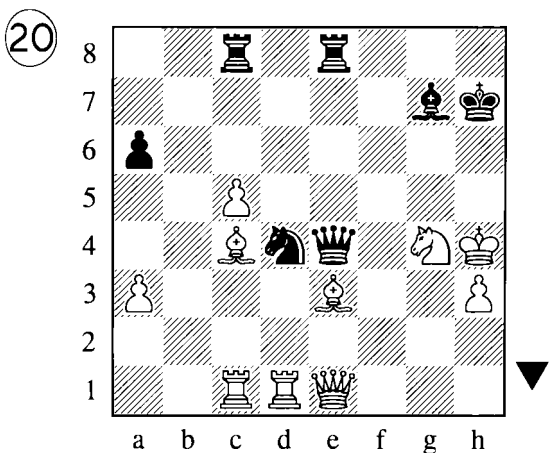
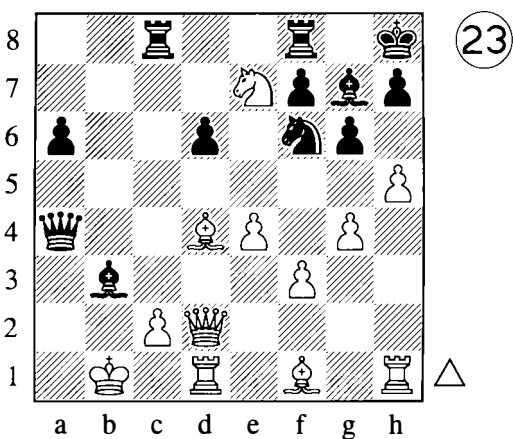
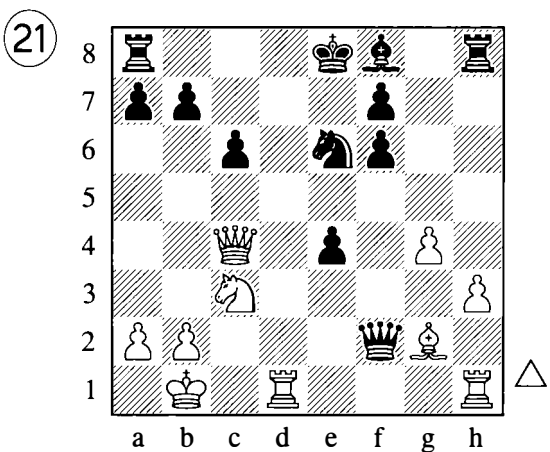
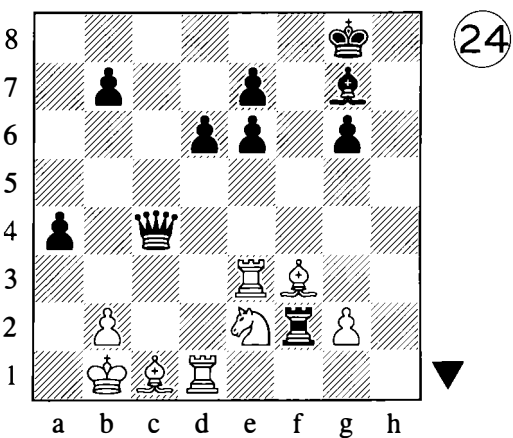
There are certainly strong threats against the black king and Black should feel nervous. However, with an intermediate move, he is able to save the game. **17...a6!** 17...♙e4 18.♙d3! is a disaster for Black. For example, 18...♙d5 19.♘c2 or 18...♙xd3 19.♙ad1 ♙e4 20.♘xc6† and mate to follow. **18.♘xc6†** 18.a3 ♘xd4 19.♙xd4 ♙d6 gives quite a complicated game where Black may have good chances of starting a serious attack. A fantasy line could be 20.♙d3 ♙g5! 21.♙xf6 ♙xf6 22.♙d4 ♙xd4 23.♘xd4 ♙c5 and life is sweeter for Black. **18...♙xc6 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6:** Black is so close, but still misses 19...♙e4!, when the threat of mate is rather annoying for White. He has no choice but to look for a draw after 20.♙e5† ♘a8 21.♘c7† ♘a7 22.♘b5†. **20.♙xb4±** White won on move 46.

17. Aagaard – Isonzo, Arco 2005

32.♙xc6 ♙xc4 33.♙c1 ♙e6 33...bxc6 34.♙xc4 f5 35.♙e3 and White wins. **34.♙d6!** The intermediate move – very simple really. Instead 34.♙xe6? fxe6 35.♙e3± was the game. I won on move 64, but was greatly disappointed with my play. I was sure I had the win in my hands earlier, and walking back to the hotel it was not difficult to work out the win in my head. **34...bxc6 35.♙xb8 ♙xb8 36.♙xc6 ♙d7 37.♙c4 ♘f8 38.b7** White wins.

18. Robson – Belous, Moscow 2012

White only one immediate win. **27.♙xh6!!** 27.♘d5 ♘xd5 28.♙xd5 ♙f6± favours White, but this spectacular intermediate move is better. **27...♙xh6 27...♘h6 28.♙h3† ♘h5 29.♘d5** followed by 30.♙xe6 is a fairly simple win. **28.♘d5 ♘xd5** White now has a check on f7. **29.♙f7† ♙g7 30.♙xc6 ♘e3 30...♘c7 31.♙g4** would also lead to a winning attack. The threat is ♙h4†: 31...♙e8 32.♙h3† ♘g8 33.♙d7 d5 34.♙f7† ♘h7 35.♙f3 winning. **31.♙d3 ♘f5 32.♙xf5** Black is mated. **1–0**

Kulaots – B. Savchenko, Konya 2011**Poulton – Shaw**, West Bromwich (var) 2002**Navara – Colin**, Aix-les-Bains 2011**Solak – Milenkovic**, Nova Gorica 2011**Tikkanen – Grover**, Wijk aan Zee 2012**Lintchevski – Azarov**, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

19. Kulaots – B. Savchenko, Konya 2011

31...♙xc2! 32.♜xc2 ♖f1!! A strong intermediate move. **32...♞d3†!** **33.♙c1 ♜xe3** is also somewhat better for Black, but certainly not completely clear. And please note that **33...♜f1?** does not work here. White plays **34.g6†!! ♙xg6 35.♜xf1 ♜xf1 36.♙f4†** and wins. **33.♙f6†** White has to try something and this is the best attempt. **33.♜xf1 ♞d3† 34.♙c1 ♜xf1 35.g6† ♙h8!** shows why the move order in the game is essential. There is nothing to take on f8 after **36.g7†. 33.♙f4** also does not hold water. Black wins after **33...♜8xf4 34.♙xf4 ♜xe1 35.♜xe1 hxg5 36.♙e3 ♙h6**, although there is some resistance to be offered by White here as well. **33...♜8xf6 34.♞e2 34.gxf6?!** loses instantly to **34...♞d3† 35.♙c1 ♞xe3†! 34...♜6f2! 35.♙xf2 35.♜xh6† ♙xh6 36.♙xf2** also does not work. Black wins after **36...♞d3†! 37.♞xd3† cxd3 38.♙xd3 ♙xg4** with the main point being that the pawn ending after **39.♙e3?! ♜f3!** is won for Black. He will just throw in ...♙g6 before taking on e3. **39.♙h4 ♜f3† 40.♙e2 ♜e3† 41.♙f1 ♜h3 42.♙f2 ♙g6** would be a less dramatic, but not less conclusive finish. **35...♜xh1 36.♙e3 36.♜c1 ♜h3!** also leads to a winning attack. For example: **37.♙e3 ♞e4!** with the idea ...hxg5 and ...♙h6. After **38.gxh6 ♙xh6 39.♙xh6** Black can either exchange into a won rook ending, or go for the winning attack with: **39...♜d3† 40.♙e1 ♞h1† 41.♙f2 ♞xh6 42.♜c2 ♞h2† 43.♙e1 ♞g1†** and wins. **36...♜a1** The rook swings to the queenside and decides the game. White has no counterplay. **37.gxh6 ♜xa3!?** Good enough although **37...♙xh6** was a little stronger. There is no defence against ...♙xg4 with decisive threats. **38.♞f1 b4 39.♜c1 ♜a2† 40.♙e1 b3 0–1**

20. Navara – Colin, Aix-les-Bains 2011

In the game Black make his task difficult: **40...♙f3†!** **40...♞e7†?** leads to a draw after **41.♙g5 ♞xe1† 42.♜xe1 ♙f5†** with perpetual check. After **40...♙f3†? 41.♙h5!** White would be on his way to the full point: **41...♞c6 42.♜d6! ♙xd6 43.cxd6 ♞xd6 44.♙f7** and the extra material will count. **41.♙g3 ♙xe1 42.♜xe1 ♜f8** Black was still winning easily after **42...♙e5†! 43.♙f2 ♜f8† 44.♙g1 ♙d4! 45.♜cd1 ♙xe3† 46.♙xe3 ♞h4**, when White's defence is falling away. **43.♙f2 ♜f3† 44.♙h2 ♞f4† 45.♙g2 ♜f8?!** **45...♙d4!** was stronger. Black wins. **46.♜c2 ♜xa3 47.♙d5 ♙h8? 47...♙d4!** was still winning. **48.c6 ♜c3 48...♜d3** also seems to lead to a draw after complicated play: **49.c7 ♜xd5 50.c8=♞ ♞f3† 51.♙h2 ♜xc8 52.♜xc8† ♙h7 53.♜e3 ♙e5† 54.♜xe5 ♜xe5 55.♜c7† ♙g8 56.♜c8† ♙g7 57.♜c7† ♙f8 58.♜c8† ♙e7 59.♙h4† ♙d6 60.♙xe5 ♞e2† 61.♙g1 ♞xe5 62.♜g8** and White should hold. **49.♜xc3 ♙xc3 50.♜e3 ♞d4 51.♙f3 ♞c4 52.♙g3 ♜xf3 53.♜xf3 ♞xc6 54.♙e5 ♞d5 55.♙g6† ♙h7 56.♙e7 ♞e4 57.♙f5 a5 58.♙d6 ♙e1 59.♙g3 ♙xg3 60.♙xg3 ♞d5 61.♙e2 a4 62.♙c3 ♞d2† 63.♙g3 a3 64.♜f7† ♙g6 65.♜f6† ♙g7 66.♜f3 ♞e1† 67.♙g2 ♙g6 68.♙h2 a2 69.♙xa2 ♞e2† 70.♙g3 ♞xa2 71.♜f4 ♞a3† 72.♙g2 ♙g5 73.♜g4† ♙f5 74.♙h2 ♞b2† 75.♙g1 ♞e2 76.♙h1 ♞f2 77.♜g2 ♞e1† 78.♜g1 ♞e4† 79.♙h2 ♞c2† 80.♜g2 ♞c7† 81.♙h1 ♙f4 82.♙h2 ½–½**

The simplest way to win was: **40...♙f6†!** The transfer of the bishop from g7 to e5 improves on the win of material and converts it into a mating attack. **41.♙g3** (41.♙g5 ♙xg5† 42.♙xg5 ♙f3† 43.♙f6 ♞f4#) **41...♙e5†! 42.♙h4** (42.♙f2 ♜f8† wins everything and 42.♙xe5 ♞xe5† 43.♙g2 ♞e4† is almost worse!) **42...♙f3† 43.♙h5 ♞g6#**

21. Tikkanen – Grover, Wijk aan Zee 2012

White has a very attractive sacrifice at his disposal, but it is important to have a small intermediate move included in the combination to make it work. **21. ♖xe4! ♜xg2 22. ♜hg1!!** It is more natural to investigate: 22. ♖xf6† ♜e7 23. ♜d7? (It should be said that White is still winning after 23. ♜hg1! although it is slightly inaccurate compared to the game, for reasons that are too unimportant to discuss.) 23... ♜xf6 24. ♜f1† ♜g5 25. ♜dx7 ♜e8! (But not 25... ♜g7? as 26. ♜7f2! ♜xh3 27. ♜f5† ♜h4 28. ♜e4 with ♜h1 on the cards wins for White.) 26. ♜1f5† ♜g6 It turns out that this is not as dangerous as it looks for Black. White should consider taking the perpetual check. **22... ♜h2 22... ♜f3 23. ♜gf1** wins instantly. **23. ♖xf6† ♜e7 24. ♜d7†!** Now this combination works. White has the important extra options of checking with the g-pawn and using the e4-square for the queen. **24... ♜xf6 25. ♜f1† ♜g5 26. ♜f5† ♜h6 26... ♜g6 27. ♜e4!** leaves Black without a move. **27. ♜dx7** The simplest, although 27. g5† ♜g6 28. ♜f6† ♜xg5 29. ♜dx7 ♜xh3 30. ♜xe6 also wins. **27... ♖g7 27... ♜e8** is mate in three: 28. g5† ♜g6 29. ♜5f6† ♜xg5 30. ♜g4# After 27... ♜g1† 28. ♜f1 ♜e3 White has various winning moves, for example: 29. g5† ♜xg5 30. ♜1f6† ♜h5 31. ♜e2† ♜h4 32. ♜xe6 and Black cannot avoid mate for long. **28. g5† ♜h7 29. g6† ♜xg6 30. ♜7f6†** Black resigned. 30... ♜h7 31. ♜h6†! ♜xh6 32. ♜h4† ♖h5 33. ♜xh5† ♜g7 34. ♜f7† ♜h6 35. ♜h5# **1-0**

22. Poulton – Shaw, West Bromwich (var) 2002

Black does not have any direct active move, but he can improve his situation without offering his opponent any way out of his predicament. **33... ♜h7!!** After 33... ♜xe3? 34. ♜xf8† ♜h7 35. ♜xc6 Black has no win: 35... ♜d4 36. ♜e4 and it is time to take a draw with 36... e2† 37. ♜xd4 ♜xg3†. Also 33... ♜e8? 34. ♜xc5 ♜xg3 35. ♜3f2 ♜xf2† 36. ♜xf2 gives Black nothing more than perpetual check. **34. ♜xc5 34. ♜xf4** would be attractive, if the X-ray attack on e3 did not exist. 34... ♜xe3† and wins. **34... ♜xg3 35. ♜3f2 35. ♜xg7† ♜xg7 36. ♜xf8†** does not improve anything. After 36... ♜g8 White has nothing better than 37. ♜1f2, giving up a rook with a lost ending. **35... ♜xf2† 36. ♜xf2 ♜d8!** Black has a winning attack. **37. ♜f7 ♜d1† 38. ♜f1 ♜g4† 39. ♜h1 39. ♜f2 ♜d2† 40. ♜e3 ♜e2†** and everything goes. **39... ♜d5 40. ♜d6 ♜h3† 41. ♜h2 ♜d2** Black wins.

23. Solak – Milenkovic, Nova Gorica 2011

20. ♜xb3 ♜b8! The first intermediate move. White should have expected this. 20... ♜xb3† 21. ♜b2 is pretty hopeless. Black can try 21... ♖xe4 22. ♜xe4 ♜b8, but White is winning after: 23. ♜xg6! ♜xb2† 24. ♜xb2 ♜xb2† 25. ♜c1 h6 26. e5 ♜a2 27. ♜xd6 **21. h6!!** This is the only winning move. You have to be pretty cool to see that Black is not threatening anything. After 21. ♜b5 ♜xb3† 22. ♜b2 ♜xb2† 23. ♜xb2 ♜xh5! 24. ♜xh5 ♖e8! White's advantage would have been kept to a minimum. **21... ♜xb3† 22. ♜c1 22. ♜b2?** would be mistaken. After 22... ♜xb2†! 23. ♜xb2 ♜xd1† 24. ♜a2 ♜a4† Black escapes with a draw. **22... ♜a3† 23. ♜b2 ♜c5† 24. ♜c2!** 24. ♜b1 is also possible, but the move in the game is clearer. **24... ♜e3† 25. ♜d2!** Again White needs to be accurate. After 25. ♜b1? ♜fb8 26. ♜xg7† ♜xg7 White has to find 27. ♜h3! to escape with a draw. **25... ♜fb8 25... ♜e1† 26. ♜d1** is over too. **26. ♜xg7† ♜xg7 27. ♖d5 27. ♜xf6†** was simpler. **27... ♜e1† 28. ♜d1 ♜a5 29. ♜xf6† ♜f8 30. ♜xh7 ♜b1† 31. ♜xb1 ♜xb1† 32. ♜xb1 1-0**

24. Lintchevski – Azarov, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

25...b5?! 26.♖d2 b4 27.♖c2 ♗b5 28.♙g4 ♜f5? 28...♙h6! 29.♙xe6† ♜g7 30.♙c4 ♗d7+ would still have kept a lot of pressure on White. After the move played, Black eventually won on move 38, but White could have more or less equalized with: 29.♜g3! ♜e5 30.♙xe6† ♜h7 31.♜e4+ ♙h6 32.♜xd6! exd6 33.♖c7+ ♜h8 34.♖c8+ with perpetual check.

25...g5?! is the right idea, but the wrong execution. After 26.♖d2!+ Black has nothing special on account of 26...g4? 27.♖c4!±.

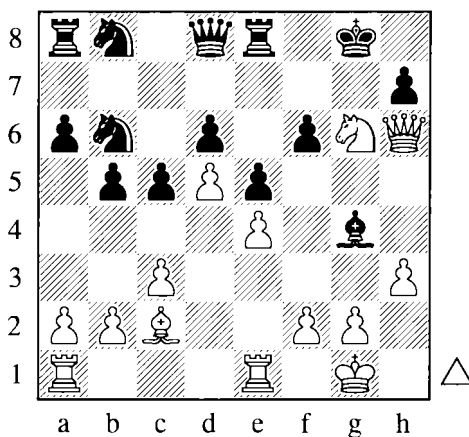
The correct move was: **25...a3!!** The rook cannot take the pawn on account of ...♖xe2, so White's options are limited. **26.bxa3 g5!** With the unstoppable threat of ...g4. **27.♖d2 g4** Black wins on account of **28.♖c4 ♗b3†**.

Chapter 7

Imagination

Norbert Friedrich – Christoph Klamp

Roganska Slatina 2011



White to play – be imaginative!

Imagination in chess is hard to define beyond the discovery of strong ideas that come as a surprise to most. But you can also look at it as going beyond the obvious moves in order to see the true nature of the position. This can be the activation of pieces overriding a recapture, it can be favouring a pawn over a piece, and it can be putting a piece on a square that is seemingly not available, but where it cannot be captured – and so on.

Imagination can certainly be trained. Like candidate moves, the training method is, before anything else, to be aware of the need for training it. What I think is quite important to understand is that imagination does not arise from some gene we acquired at birth, nor does it arise from an alcohol-fuelled lifestyle, as some people do seem to think.

Imagination is a combination of awareness of the real aspects of the position over more mundane human considerations. Imagination in chess is not different from logic in chess; it is simply one of many reflections of it. And this is the reason it can be trained, because what we train when we train imagination is awareness of the basics of chess: weaknesses, the opponent's ideas, piece placement and pawn structure.

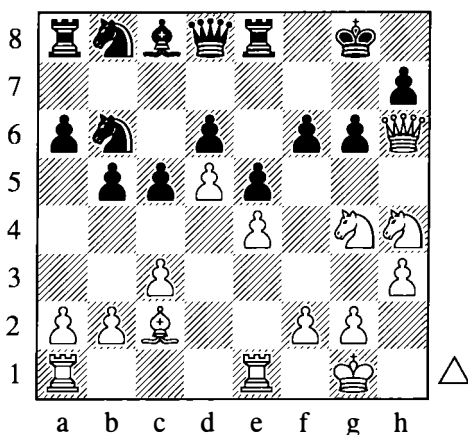
So imagination can partly be trained by training our positional and strategic abilities, but also by solving really difficult positions. Endgame studies are usually based on surprising solutions and the same is true for combinations, though the common ones are generally not that surprising for a strong player and the themes are usually already known.

For this book I have collected thirty positions which I find require a bit of imagination. Some of them could also be placed in the section on combinations, but in the end I decided to put them here. There is a sliding scale between puzzles for imagination and those for combinational vision.

But before you are allowed to take a punt at these, I would like to show you a few cases of imagination.

Norbert Friedrich – Christoph Klamp

Roganska Slatina 2011



White is obviously seeking his fortunes on the kingside and, with the aggressively placed knights and the lack of defenders around the black king, this is not a bad moment to strike.

21. ♖xg6!

I would not call this imagination. Rather it is a wrist movement. Black is now forced to take on g4, eliminating at least one of the attackers, as there is no future after 21...hxg6 22. ♗xg6† ♜h8 23. ♜xf6.

21... ♜xg4

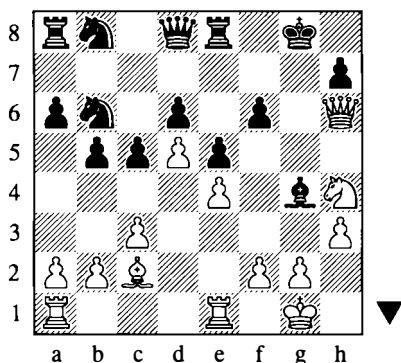
This is the position from the front page of this chapter. White has a few strong and very surprising moves, but they are not obvious and require a bit of investment.

22.hxg4?

A very natural move, for which Norbert is entirely forgiven. After all, he did not know he was about to appear in a chapter on imagination.

White had two far stronger options that would not have met substantial resistance, had he chosen them.

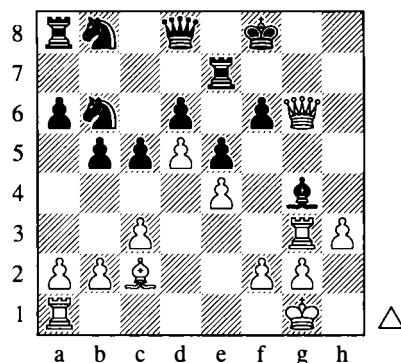
The most beautiful move is the simple-looking 22.♖h4!!.



White is not rejecting the idea of taking the bishop on g4, he is just delaying it for a moment and preparing to play ♖f5. It is more important to leave the g-file open for the white rook.

Black would probably have lost on time, trying to find a move that does not make his position fall apart immediately. The most obvious of these would be retracting the bishop, for example with 22...♗c8, which is met with 23.♞e3 and Black can only resign.

But White had another logical way of playing. He could bring in the rook with 22.♞e3!, with a winning attack. A nice line is: 22...hxg6 23.♞xg6 ♖f8 24.♞g3 ♞e7



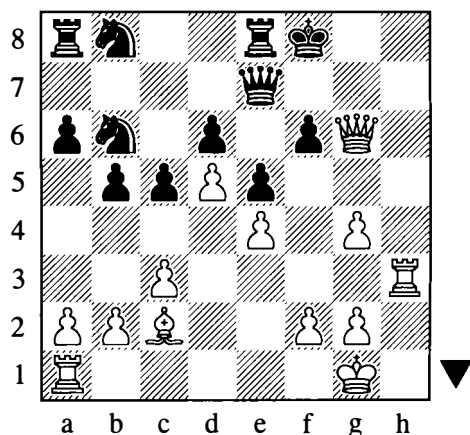
Once again there are several “obvious” moves that lead to a strong attack, but if we keep our mind on our principles rather than following our nose, we will see that White does not need to take the bishop on g4 yet, and can instead include another piece in the attack with 25.♗d1!!.

The rest of the game is not especially interesting, but shows that Black still had some chances, but that his position was quite difficult to start with.

22...hxg6 23.♞xg6 ♖f8 24.♞e3

Probably even stronger was 24.g5! ♞e7 25.♞xf6 ♖e8, although Black is not without fighting chances.

24...♞e7 25.♞h3



25...♞f7??

Black should have played 25...♞g7 26.♞f5 ♞e7, when he faces a terrifying attack, but is not yet done for.

26.♞f5 ♞a7 27.g5 ♖g8 28.gxf6
1-0

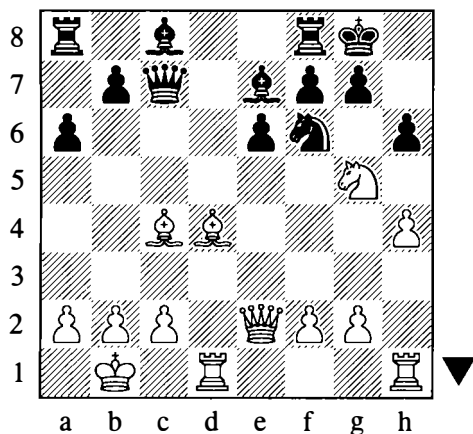
Maybe the most imaginative grandmaster in the world is Alexander Morozevich. His openings are not always that colourful, even

though he did invent a very important line in the Slav Defence and brought back the King's Indian Attack against the French. Still, what usually impresses me most are the deep decisions he makes at the board, where he will play moves that look entirely wrong but have deep strategic ideas connected to them, which are only revealed later. Check out his games and you will see what I mean.

Having praised Morozevich sky high, it is only fitting that I tear him down again by showing a game where he was lucky to escape with a draw when his opponent played a truly imaginative positional idea.

Alexander Morozevich – Alexander Khalifman

Taganrog 2011



We enter the game at a point where Black could have equalized easily with 17...♖d8, but instead Khalifman found a fantastic trap that Morozevich could not resist.

17...b5!? 18.gd3 gb7!

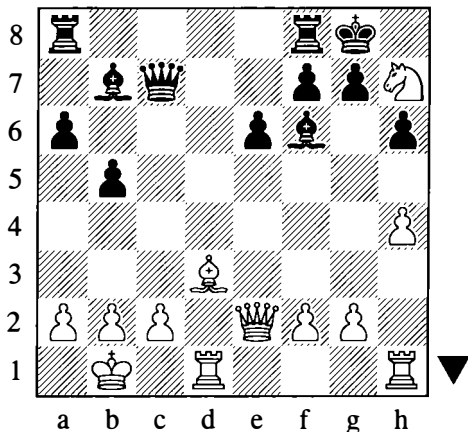
Black is unashamed and it was entirely obvious to Morozevich that he was being invited to enter the h7-square, in the way a mouse is tempted with cheese to enter the trap. In this case the cheese was too good looking to

resist, but to be fair to Morozevich, Fritz 13 wants to gobble it all up as well!

19.gxf6

Accepting the challenge. 19.gxe5 ♖c5 20.gd4 ♖c7 was safer, but this would accept that White has no advantage.

19...gxf6 20.fh7

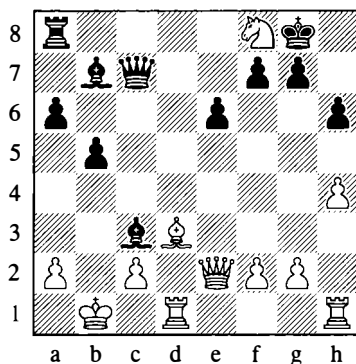


20...gxb2!!

Morozevich had of course foreseen this sacrifice – what else should Black play? With all kinds of ♖h1-h3-g3 manoeuvres in the air, Black cannot accept having his kingside weakened.

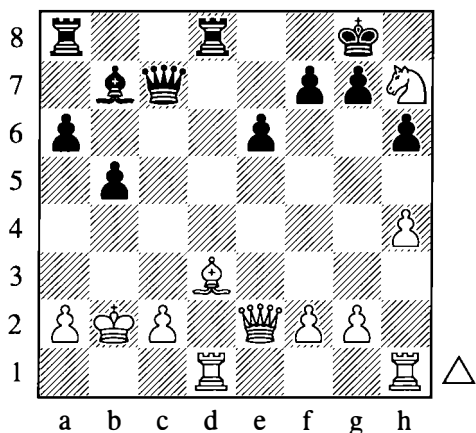
21.fxb2

This is the only move. 21.fxf8 is met with the beautiful 21...gxc3!!.



White is under a strong attack from which he will never recover.

21...♖fd8



How did the players evaluate this position during the game? My guess is that neither had a good idea about who was better, but they found the position fascinating and believed it would give them a chance to play for a win.

22.♖he1

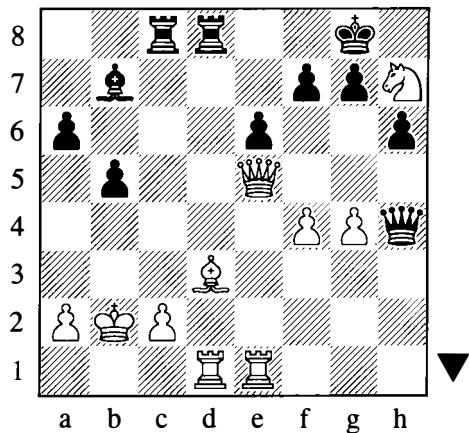
22.♖h3! with the idea 23.♖g3 looked more natural. White would keep the position in balance.

22...♖f4 23.♖e5 ♖xh4 24.f4

The endgame arising after 24.♖e3 ♖d4† 25.♖xd4 ♖xd4 26.♖f6† gxf6 27.♖h7† ♖xh7 28.♖xd4 ♖xg2 offers Black no problems, but White is okay too.

24...♖ac8 25.g4?

This is a blunder that gives Black the chance to seize the advantage. A cautious move like 25.a3 would have kept White fully in the game. The position is deeply unclear, but with easier play for Black.

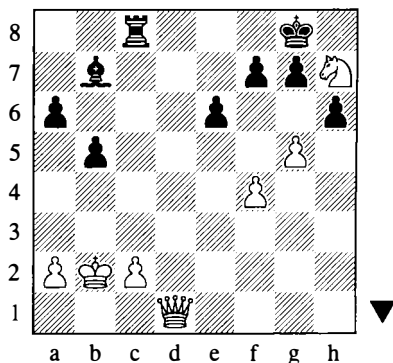


25...♖f2?

25...♖f3! 26.♖d2 ♖xg4+ would have ensured Black a better game. Morozevich no doubt played his last move as a pawn sacrifice to open the g-file and Khalifman rejected it for that reason. But despite these considerations, Black should have taken the pawn.

26.♖b1?

This time it is White's turn to err. It was better to go for a direct attack with 26.g5!, based on 26...♖xd3 27.♖e2!, when Black has to play 27...♖xe2 28.♖xe2 ♖xd1 29.♖xd1

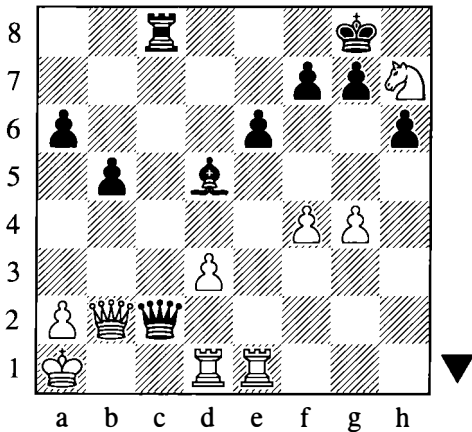


29...♖e4! 30.♖f6† gxf6 31.gxh6 ♖xc2† 32.♖b3 ♖g2 in order to keep the balance.

26...♖xd3 27.cxd3 ♖c2† 28.♖a1 ♖d5

Also possible was 28...♖xh7 29.♖c1 ♖xd3 30.♖xc8 ♖xc8+ with good play for Black.

29. ♖b2



29... ♜xh7?!

It was possible for Black to keep his advantage with 29... ♖a4! 30. ♜c1 ♜xc1† 31. ♜xc1 ♜xh7†, but instead he made sure he was not worse. You get the feeling that Khalifman was willing to give up the dream of being better just to gain some certainty. This often happens to players who are not comfortable in complicated positions. Even when they are better, they will look for clarity, even if it leads to an inferior position.

30. ♜c1 ♖xb2† 31. ♜xb2 ♜d8 32. ♜c7

The game was drawn in 57 moves.

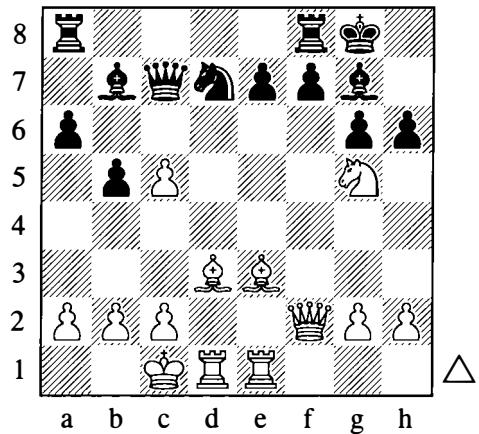
The main idea of training imagination is of course to be able to see the options your opponents do not. But it will also give you the chance to transform your style and navigate messy positions far better than your opponents. There are players who have made a career out of this idea, with Mikhail Tal and Alexei Shirov as two obvious examples. But there are many others. For example Zhao Jun. Not heard of him? Well you are not the only one. There are quite a lot of grandmasters between 2500 and 2600 nowadays. A friend of mine played in the European Championship a few years ago and, despite having been a professional chess player

since the late 1970s, he played 11 grandmasters he had never heard of in the 11 rounds of the tournament.

The following game shows Zhao Jun's talent for messing things up and then exploiting it with imaginative ideas. This does not lead to perfect chess, but it is certainly not boring!

Zhao Jun – Liu Qingnan

Xinghua 2012



White has not had great luck in the opening. Actually he has been completely outplayed and is now about to take his beating. But instead, his great inventiveness makes it possible for him to find ideas all the time, which eventually drives his opponent insane (or at least into time trouble, which is the same thing), where he loses the game.

18. ♜f3

White is not afraid to retreat all the way to the queenside, as it is necessary. Imagination is about playing strong moves, even if they at times look stupid. The main point is that they are required by the position.

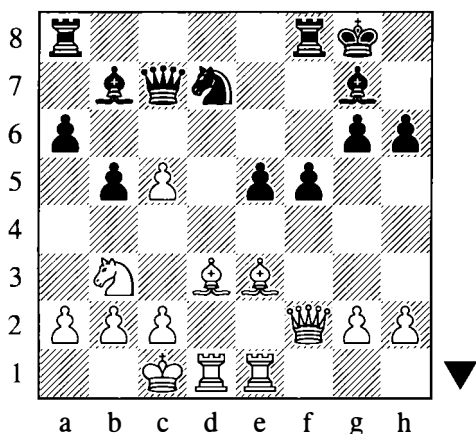
18... e5?

This is a very interesting moment. Although this move looks very good and gives Black an

advantage, it is not without drawbacks. Soon we will see the disintegration of Black's centre.

18...♖ac8! would have been stronger. It is worth noticing how Black does not manage to bring his pieces quickly into play, the main objective at the end of the opening stage.

19.♘d2 ♜ 20.♘b3!



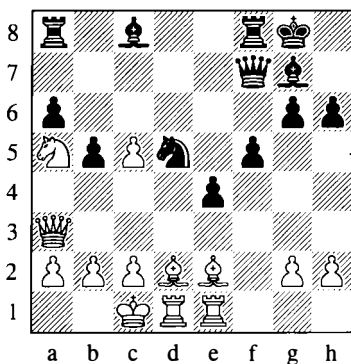
The knight looks like a target on the queenside, but Black's play in the centre is flowing so well that White has to find something to play for. Blocking the queenside for a while and making something out of the c-pawn certainly makes sense. And the knight is no longer going to be trapped by the advancing black pawns in the centre.

20...♘f6 21.♙d2 a5

I quite like this move as it does not allow White to occupy the a5-square. But it is also quite risky. Black is about to lose his advantage by making normal-looking moves. The problem here is that his opponent is a strong player and has taken natural-looking moves into consideration and planned to meet them with imaginative tactics. Black had to go deeper in order to keep the advantage.

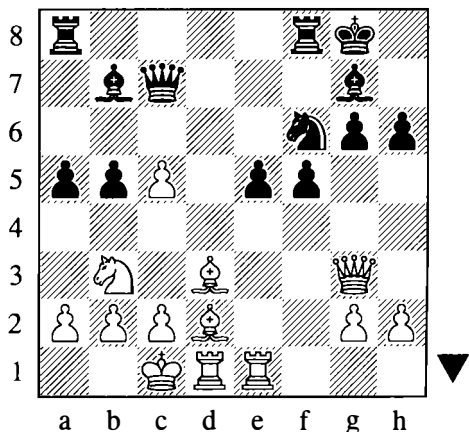
At this point it was interesting to try 21...e4 22.♙e2 ♘d5, even though White would

have had some success with his strategy after: 23.♙g3! ♙f7 24.♘a5 ♙c8 25.♙a3 ♜



Black has the better position, but White has found quite a lot of play over the last seven moves.

22.♙g3!!



To me this is simply brilliant and shows the way Zhao Jun is able to make his pieces play together. The queen is targeting almost all the black pawns (which are suddenly not strong, but targets) and preparing all kinds of assaults with the minor pieces. Black is still better, but it is no longer easy.

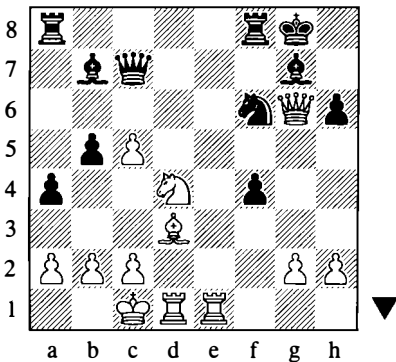
22...a4?

With this Black is no longer better, nor even close to it in fact.

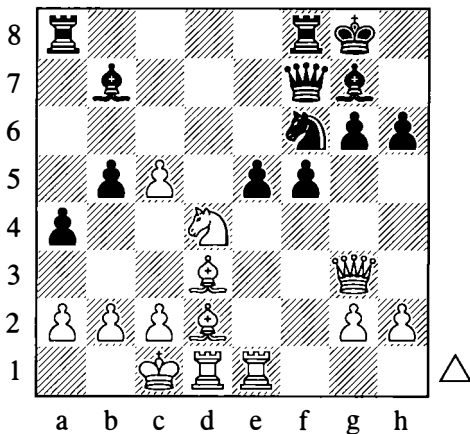
The correct move might have been 22...♘e4! to take control of the centre and then after 23.♖xg6 to play 23...a4 with attacking chances on the queenside. The position is obviously a complete mess and we can see now how fundamentally wrong Black's 18th move was.

23.♘d4 ♖f7

23...f4 could be met with 24.♙xf4! exf4 25.♖xg6, when Black is in an uncomfortable position.



After 25...♙d5 26.♘f5 Black's defence is certainly difficult (although he might keep the balance with 26...♙a7!), while White has a better endgame after 25...♖f7 26.♖xf7† ♙xf7 27.c6 ♙a6 28.♙xb5±.



We are entering the third phase of the game.

The first was the opening where White was completely outplayed. The second was the transition from the clear positional edge Black then had to the deeply complicated middlegame we saw above. The third phase is the quicksand we have now arrived at. Almost every step forward by either army sees a soldier getting sucked down and disappeared. Actually, the position is not much different from my children's bedroom at the end of the day: everything is placed randomly all over the place.

This kind of position is very very difficult to play for anyone. According to the computer almost every move is a mistake (okay, that's exaggerated, but you get my point) and both players must have struggled tremendously, against the position, their own nerves and not least the clock!

I am quite impressed by Zhao Jun and the way he manages to outplay his opponent with a great succession of interesting moves. Not all are correct, but all of them make sense in one way or another. And White manages to make far more sense of the position than Black does.

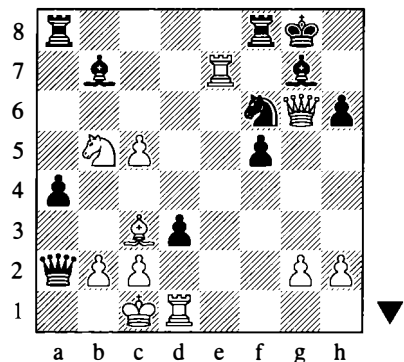
24.♙xf5?

It turns out that it was stronger to play: 24.♘xb5!

White has the advantage after:

24...♖xa2 25.♙c3 e4

25...♗h7 26.♙xe5 is also good for White. 26.♖xg6! exd3 27.♙e7

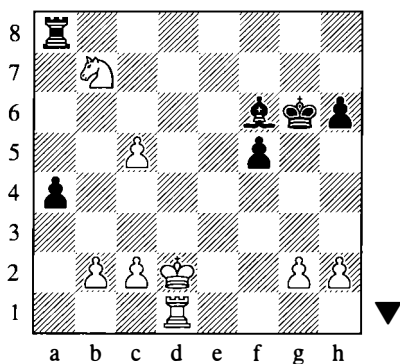


White looks almost winning, but Black can improve his chances a bit with:

27...d2† 28.♖xd2 ♜f7 29.♞xf7 ♞xf7
30.♞xf7† ♖xf7 31.♜d6† ♖g6

We now see the check coming on e4. White has to give up his good bishop.

32.♙xf6 ♙xf6 33.♜xb7



33...♙xc8!

33...♙xb2? looks logical, but actually Black would lose important time, and after 34.c3! a3 35.♖c2± the black bishop would simply be out of play.

34.♖c1! ♞c7 35.c6 ♙g5† 36.♖b1 ♞xc6 37.c3±

White has winning chances in the ending, but we should not underestimate the power of the bishop and the active black king.

24...♞ae8!?

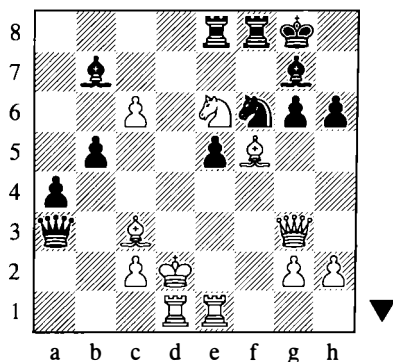
A nice active move. Black still wants to take on a2.

24...gxf5! 25.♜xf5 ♖h7 was safer. The ending after the mass exchanges looks equal to me.

25.♙e6?!

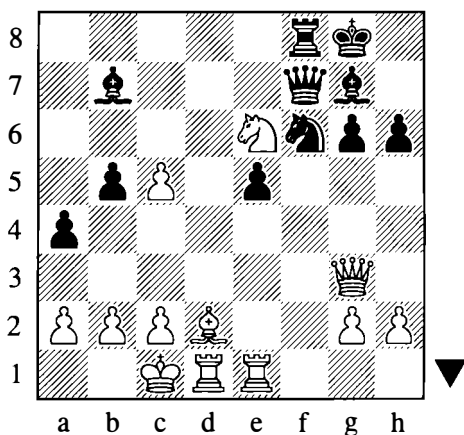
Probably overlooking Black's option on move 26.

25.c6!? is an interesting move, which leads to equality in a completely confusing line:
25...♞xa2! 26.♙b4 ♞a1† 27.♖d2 ♞xb2
28.♙c3 ♞a3 29.♜e6



29...b4! 30.cxb7 ♞xc3† 31.♞xc3 bxc3†
32.♖c1 a3! 33.♖b1 ♞b8=

25...♞xe6 26.♜xe6



26...♞xe6?

Again I want to point to awareness as the main source of imagination (as well as candidate moves). Black did not have to give up the g-pawn. 26...♜h5! 27.♞g4 ♙c8± and it would be Black who has the initiative.

27.♞g6 ♞g4 28.♞d3!?

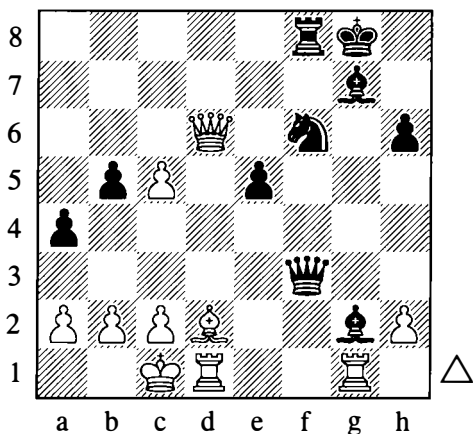
28.♞xg4! ♜xg4 29.♙c3± was probably better.

28...♙c6 29.♞d6 ♙xg2?!

This looks very dangerous. It is only fair that Black is later punished for opening the g-file.

29...♖c8 was more reasonable: 30.h3! ♖c4
31.b3 ♖f7 32.♞f1±

30.♞g1 ♖f3



31.♞d1?

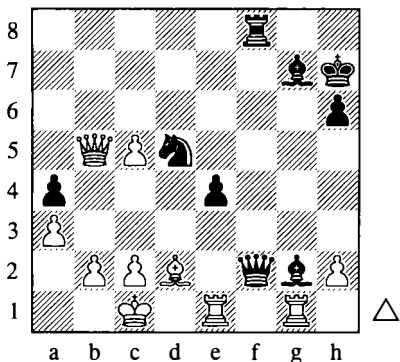
31.c6! ♖xc6 32.♖xc6 ♜xc6 33.♜xh6 would have given White a fantastic initiative in the ending. Black would have had to play very well to hold the position.

31...♜h7 32.♖d3† e4!

32...♖xd3 33.cxd3 ♜d5 34.♞xe5 ♜xa2 35.♞e7 ♞f7 36.♞xf7 ♜xf7 37.♜c3 would be unpleasant for Black. His king is very poorly placed.

33.♖xb5 ♜g4?!

Black could have held the draw here it seems, had he played 33...♜d5! 34.a3 (otherwise Black will for sure advance his a-pawn to create counterplay) 34...♖f2!.



The following line is relatively forced (but would not necessarily have happened if the position had arisen on the board). 35.♖c4 e3! 36.♖d3† ♜h8 37.♜xe3 ♜xe3 38.♖xe3 ♖xe3† 39.♞xe3 ♜d4 40.♞ge1 ♜xe3† 41.♞xe3 ♞f5 42.♞c3 ♜c6 and Black should hold the game.

34.♖xa4?!

The a-pawn is not important. White should have pushed his passed pawn immediately. 34.c6!± was the correct move.

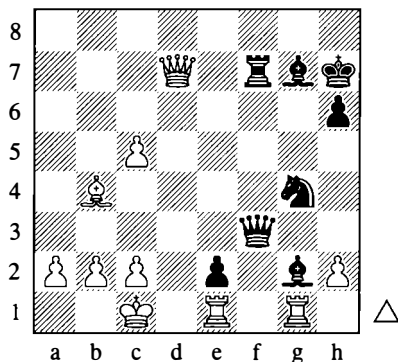
34...e3 35.♜b4

35.♜c3!±

35...e2 36.♖d7 ♜xh2?

From here the knight is really out of play.

It was better to play 36...♞f7! with unclear play.



For example: 37.♖d3† ♖xd3 38.cxd3 ♜f3 39.♜c3 ♜xc3 40.bxc3 ♜xh2∞ and Black is no worse.

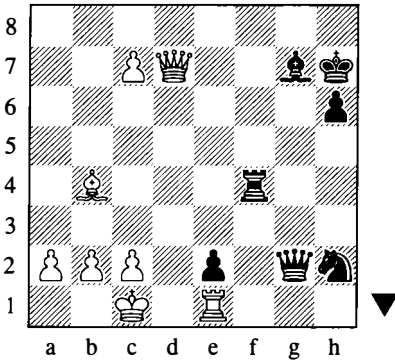
Probably 37.♖d2 is better, but the position is basically messy with no clear edge for either player. Now Black is on the back foot.

37.c6! ♞f4

37...♞f7 38.♖e6! with the threats of ♖xe2 and ♞xg2 is very good for White. For example: 38...♜f1 39.♜c3! and White wins.

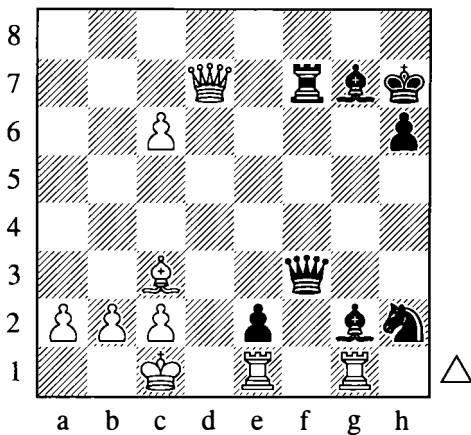
38.♜c3!?

This also wins, but White had the chance to decide the game directly with 38.♖xg2! ♖xg2 39.c7, when Black is helpless.



For example: 39...♖xb4 40.♖f5! and White ends a queen up.

38...♖f7



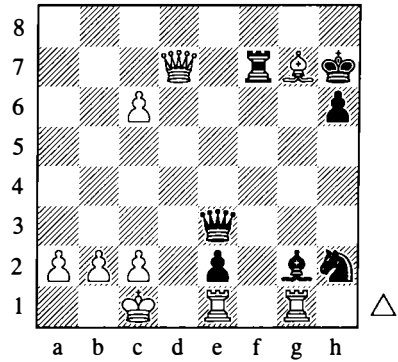
39.♙xg7?

White had a few winning combinations on hand, but this is not one of them.

The best move was 39.♖e6!, which simply wins. There is no need for variations. But there was also something like 39.♖xg2!? ♙xc3 40.♖e6! and White is winning. For example: 40...♙g7 41.♖g6! ♙h8 42.♖gxe2 and everything is clear.

39...♖xd7?!

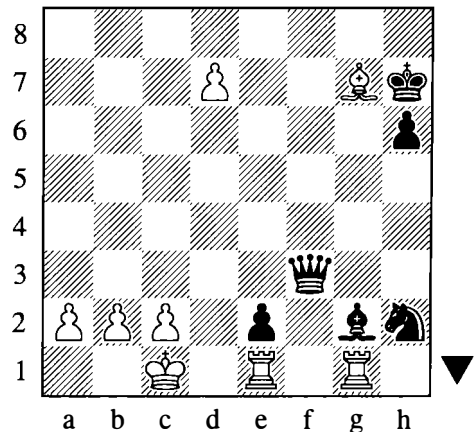
A minor flaw, but quite interestingly this is again the “obvious” move. Black had a fantastic option in 39...♖e3!.



The fabulous idea is that after 40.♙b1! then 40...♖xg1!! is a brilliant resource. There are variations, but basically White is in trouble.

For that reason he should play 40.♖d2! ♖xd2 41.♙xd2 ♙f3 42.♙xe2 ♙xg1 43.♖xg1 ♖xg7 44.b4 ♖e7 45.♙d2 ♙xc6 and although it is White who has to play energetically to make the draw, I think that will be the outcome.

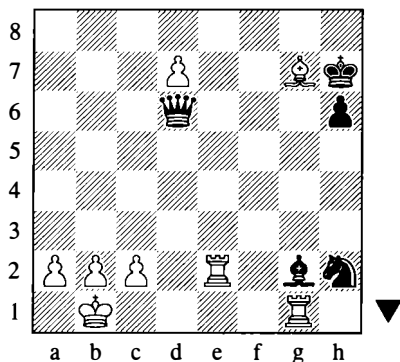
40.cxd7



Finally, with probably less than a minute on the clock, we have arrived at a moment of comparison. Should the black queen give a check on e3 or on f4?

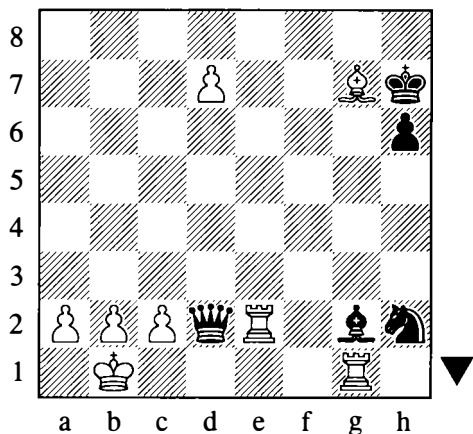
40...♚e3†?

Wrong! 40...♚f4†! was the correct answer!
After 41.♖b1 ♚d6 42.♙xe2



Black has the saving move 42...♖f3!!, when the computer thinks White's best chance is to enter a non-standard ending after 43.♙c1!?, though I would be less than happy to have two rooks against queen and knight. The idea that the white pawns will be able to advance without inviting all kinds of tactics is mysterious.

Instead I would probably look at something safer like 43.♙exg2 ♖xg1 44.♙xg1 ♚xd7 45.♙xh6!? giving up the bishop for Black's last pawn with the idea of establishing a fortress on the queenside. For example, by playing a3 and ♙c1, waiting for the right moment to play c4 and ♙c3. Even without the a- and c-pawns, this is a dead draw.

41.♖b1 ♚d2 42.♙xe2

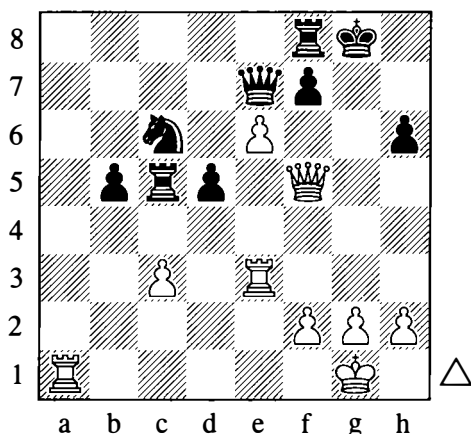
With the queen on d2 there is no time for any ...♖f3 trickery. Black just loses.

42...♙xd7 43.♙exg2 ♖f3 44.♙h1 ♖h4
45.♙gh2
1-0

I have to admit I have been a bit deceptive. Chances are that you will have seen one of Zhao Jun's game and will remember it quite well, as it is famous for the imaginative play he displayed. But before we have a look at it, let's have a sneak preview of the next example:

Sergey Fedorchuk – Levente Vajda

Corsica 2010



White missed not one but three drawing moves in this position. I challenge you to come up with just one of them!!

Zhao Jun – Xiu Deshun

Xinghua Jiangsu 2011

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 ♙b4 4.a3 ♙xc3†
5.bxc3 c5 6.e3

This line is generally considered antiquated, but in modern chess it is not always the best strategy to play for an opening advantage.

Sometimes getting your opponent into a position outside the scope of his knowledge can be at least as effective.

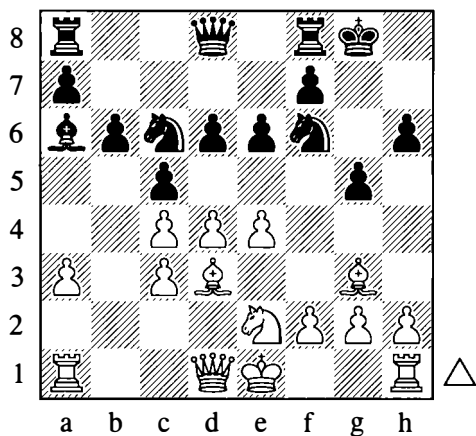
6...b6 7.♘d3 ♚c6 8.♜e2 ♘a6

The most respected line is 8...0-0 9.e4 ♜e8! with good play for Black, but the text move is also fine.

9.e4 0-0 10.♘g5 h6 11.♘h4 g5?

This looks entirely reckless. It was much better to play 11...e5 or 11...d6 as has happened in the past. This weakening of the kingside is all that Zhao Jun needs to get going.

12.♘g3 d6



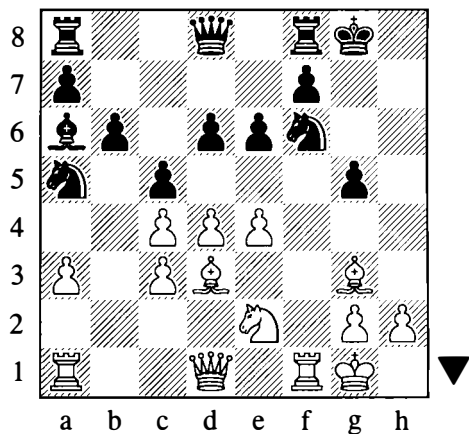
Black was no doubt mentally prepared for 13.h4, which he probably planned to meet with ...♙g7 and later ...♞h8 and ...♜h5 with complicated play. I would not aim for Black's position from the outset, but it does not look entirely untenable.

Instead Zhao Jun recognized that he would organize his pieces far better if he opened the f-file instead. Black is unable to contest it in the same way and White's king will be able to get to safety on g1.

13.f4!!

Although the logic is simple and compelling, this move is by no means standard (at least to me). Probably Black is already gone at this point and we can give this move the honour of winning the game. What happens later is amazing, but to me this is the move that impresses the most. I might have found it myself, so I am not saying that it is the most difficult move in the game; only that it is to my taste.

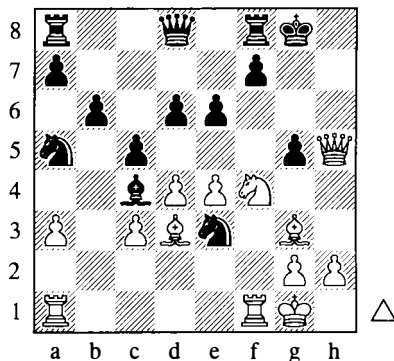
13...♜a5 14.fxg5 hxg5 15.0-0



15...♜h5

This can be refuted in several spectacular ways, but Black is already finished, as can be seen by the following variations:

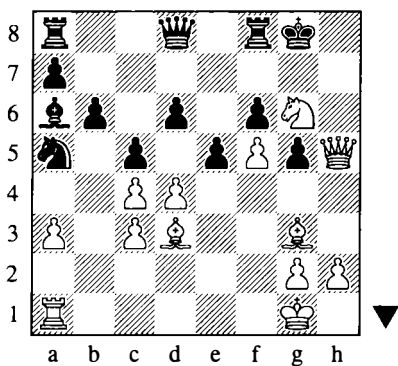
15...♜g4 16.♜f4 ♜e3 17.♞h5 ♘xc4



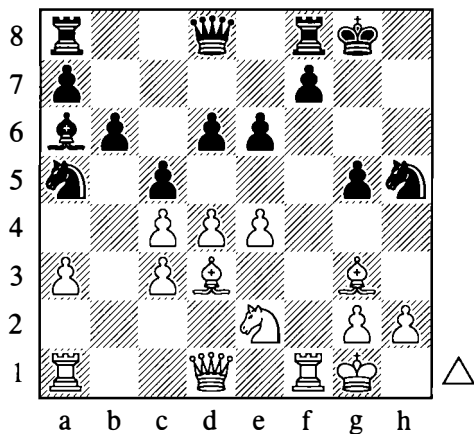
18. ♖h3!+–

15... ♖h7 16. e5 dxe5 17. ♙xh7+ ♖xh7 18. ♙xe5+–

15... e5 16. ♜f5 ♖g4 17. ♖f4 ♖e3 18. ♜h5 f6
19. ♖g6 ♖xf5 20. exf5



20... ♜d7 21. ♜h8+ ♖f7 22. ♜h7+ ♖e8
23. ♖xf8 ♜xh7 24. ♖xh7 ♖e7 25. dxe5 dxe5
26. ♙xe5 fxe5 27. f6+ ♖f7 28. ♜f1 ♜g8 29. ♜f5+–

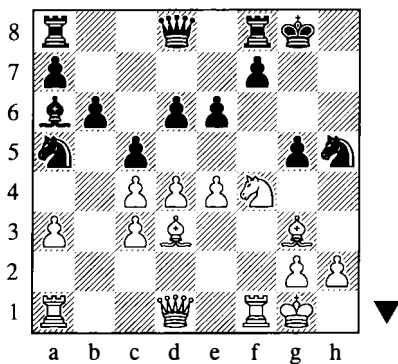


16. ♙xd6!!

This is a beautifully imaginative sacrifice. The bishop is given away to secure the takeover of the f6-square. Once again Zhao Jun proves that he rates positional factors over material.

However, there was another way for White to win, which comes across as rather more prosaic.

16. ♖f4!



White is sacrificing a piece to ensure a quick transfer of his pieces to the kingside. Black is too late to do anything about it, as the following variations show:

16... gxf4 17. ♜xh5 fxg3 18. ♜f4

16... ♖xg3 17. hxg3 ♜e7 (17... gxf4 18. ♜g4+)
18. e5 ♙xc4 19. ♖h5+–

16... ♖xf4 17. ♙xf4 f6 18. ♜h5 ♜d7 19. ♙xd6+–

16... ♜xd6 17. e5 ♜e7

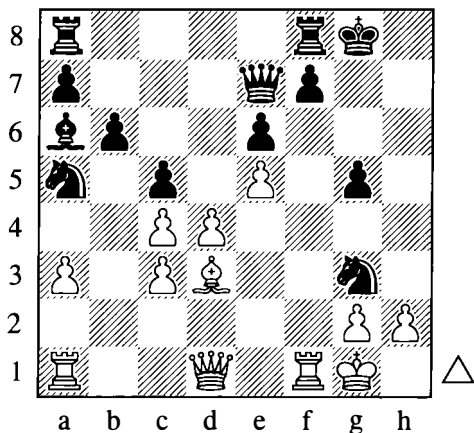
17... ♜d7 is answered by the same manoeuvre as in the game, with the difference that Black is no longer defending the g5-pawn, directly or indirectly, making White's attack even more convincing.

18. ♖g3!

Obviously this does not have to be a piece sacrifice, but the idea behind the move is that it is at least temporarily one. Again it is the control of the f6-square which is important.

18... ♖xg3

Forced. After 18... ♖g7 19. ♖e4 White has a conclusive attack.



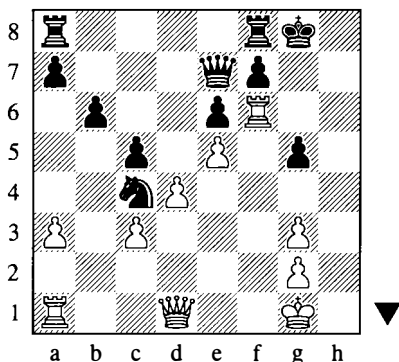
19...♔f6!!

If Black had time to play ...f7-f5 he would have chances to survive. Now he is in danger of getting mated quickly.

19...♔g7

Black is trying to get his rook to the g-file quickly to give the king an escape route.

The other important line to analyse would be 19...♕xc4 20.♕xc4 ♖xc4 21.hxg3.



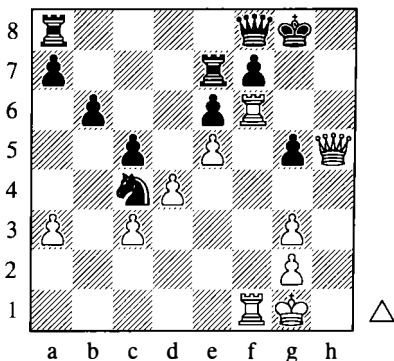
At this point Black has two defensive ideas – to bring the queen to g7 or the rook to h8. Both are insufficient, although the first requires just a little accuracy.

a) 21...♔fe8 22.♖h5 ♖f8 23.♔af1!

An important move. If White played 23.♔f2? ♖g7 24.♔h1, Black would run away with 24...♔f8!.

23...♔e7

This forced move takes away the e7-square from the king.



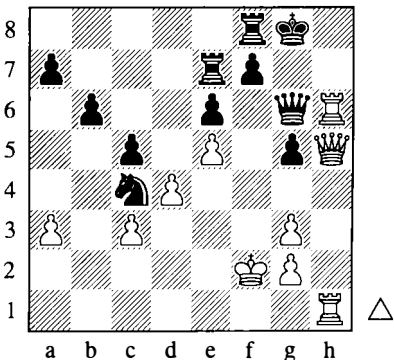
24.♔f2!

I think this is the stronger option. After 24.d5!? ♖g7 25.dxe6 ♔xe6 26.♔f5, White does win the queen, but 26...♔ae8 27.♔xg5 ♖xe5 gives Black some chances to make this a difficult technical ordeal.

24...♖g7 25.♔h1 ♔f8 26.♔h6

Black looks absolutely busted, but he has one trick left.

26...♖g6!?



27.♖d1!! ♖f5+

Forced. After 27...♖g7 28.♔h8! White gives a lot of checks and runs away with a decisive amount of material.

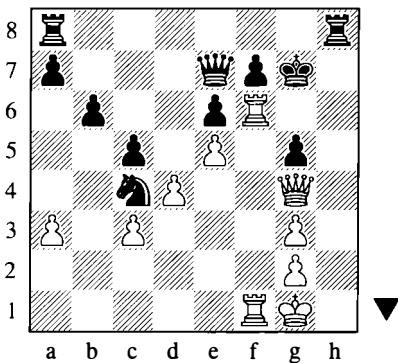
28.♔g1 f6 29.♔h8+ ♔g7 30.♔xf8!

White is winning. A possible end could be:

30...♔xf8 31.♔h8+ ♔g7 32.♖h5

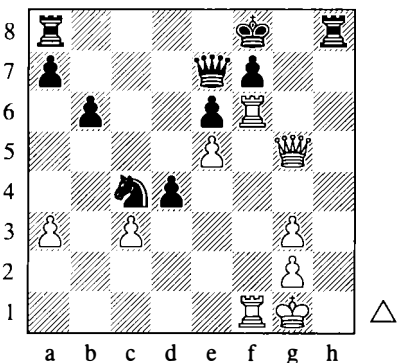
Black is mated.

b) 21...♔g7 White continues in the standard way: 22.♖g4 ♜h8 23.♞af1



Now 23...♞ad8, 23...♞ac8 and 23...♞ab8 are all easily refuted by 24.♖xg5+ ♔f8 25.♞xf7+, when White will eventually pick up an extra piece after a few checks, with a winning ending.

23...cxd4 24.♖xg5+ ♔f8 also allows White to win after taking on f7, but White has an even more delicious win:



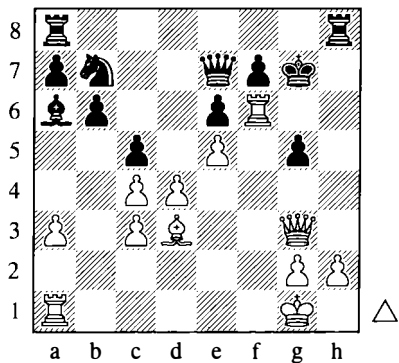
25.♖f4! ♜h7 26.♖e4! White wins.

20.♖g4 ♜g8

Black could also try 20...♜h8, but after 21.♖xg3 ♔b7 White has a strong break on the light squares.

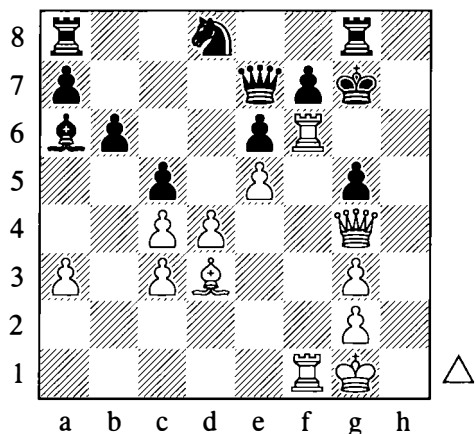
Please note how the e6- and f7-pawns are holding the black position together and how in most lines White destroys this structure before going for the king. This theme of attacking the

opponent where he is strongest is also covered in *Attacking Manual 1*.



22.d5! First the e6-pawn is removed. 22...exd5 23.♖xg5+ ♔f8 24.♙g6 ♔d8 25.cxd5 White wins. He can continue with both d5-d6 and e5-e6 with a winning attack.

21.hxg3 ♔b7 22.♞af1 ♔d8



23.♖e4

White had other ways to win the game, all based on the destruction of the defence of f7: 23.♖h5 ♔f8 24.♙g6 ♜g7 25.♞xf7+ ♔xf7 26.♞xf7+ and 23.d5 exd5 24.♖h5 ♔f8 25.e6!

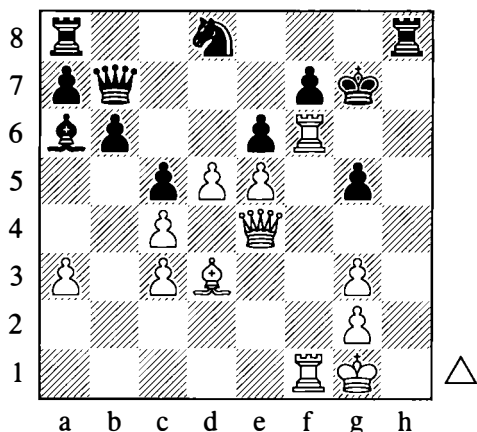
23...♖b7 24.d5!?

White could win with simple means after 24.♖h7+ ♔f8 25.d5! but I suspect Zhao Jun was anticipating that his opponent would prevent this check if he gave him the chance,

which then allows a much nicer win. Yes, it is a bit like playing with your food, but we have all done it and know the pleasure it can provide.

24...♖h8

Taking an important square away from the king, but then again, 24...exd5 loses to 25.♖h7† ♜f8 26.e6 and f7 falls.



25.♖g6†!

Black is also mated after 25.♖xf7† ♜xf7 26.♖g6† ♜f8 27.dxe6, but the finish in the game is of course much to be preferred.

25...fxg6

25...♜f8 26.dxe6 and f7 falls.

26.♖xg6† ♜h7 27.♖xg5† ♜h6 28.♖g6† ♜h7 29.♖g4† ♜h6 30.♖f6† ♜h5 31.♖h4†

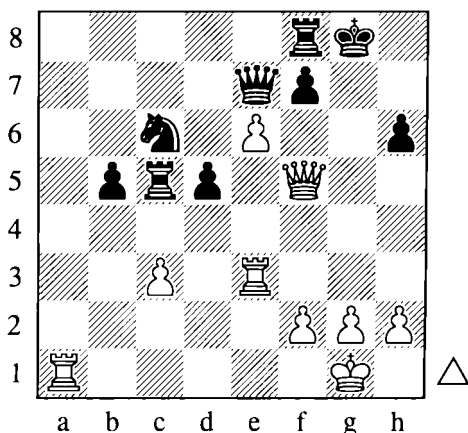
Black resigned. 31...♜g5 is met by 32.♖g6#. 1-0

One of the most beautiful games of the 21st century so far, although maybe not played on the highest possible level. To me, the main difference in the creative achievements by Zhao Jun in the two games is that his opponent played poorly in the opening in the second game, but had an advantage in the first!

Before I leave you to improve your imagination we have the matter of this final position.

Sergey Fedorchuk – Levente Vajda

Corsica 2010



White missed not one but three drawing moves in this position. I challenge you to come up with just one of them!!

27.♖ae1?

This was certainly not one of them. White is just lost.

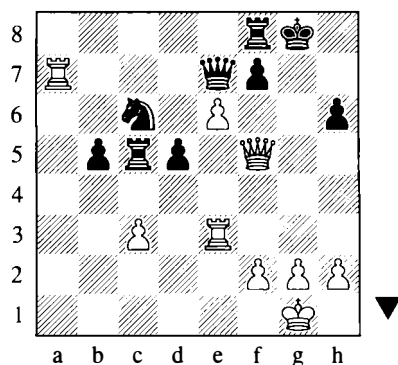
27...d4 28.♖g3† ♜h8 29.♖f4

29.♖g4 ♖g5 and Black wins.

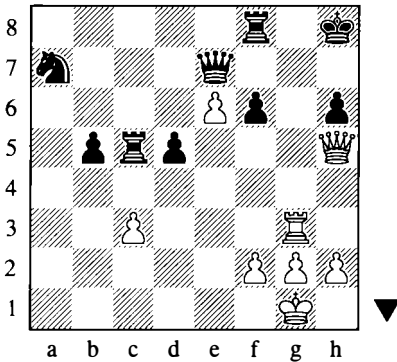
29...♖g5 30.h4 fxe6 31.♖xf8† ♖xf8 32.hxg5 dxc3 33.♖xc3 ♖b4 34.♖ee3 ♜d4 35.♖c8† ♜h7 36.♖c7† 0-1

So what should White have done? Let's try to be imaginative!

27.♖a7?

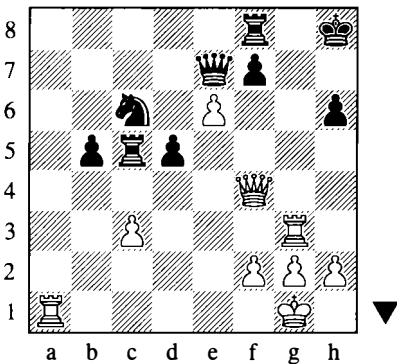


This is quite an advanced idea that unfortunately does not work. After 27...♘xa7! 28.♖g3† ♕h8 29.♞e5† f6 30.♞h5 it appears that White is about to win the queen and create a lot of counterplay in the process. For example: 30...♞h7 31.♖g6 ♖xc3 32.h4 with good drawing chances.



But Black can use the weakness of the first rank to his advantage with a nice little move: 30...♖f7!! White has nothing better than 31.♞xf7 ♞xf7 32.exf7 ♖c8 and Black wins.

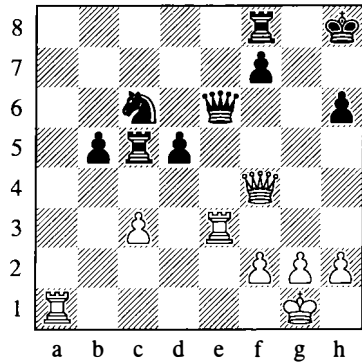
The original intended solution was 27.♖g3† ♕h8 28.♞f4!!.



This looks like very simple play, but there is a fantastic hidden point to it.

Obviously Black can play 28...♕h7, but White checks on f5 and returns to f4 with a repetition.

But the reason why Fedorchuk (and maybe you) let go of this line was of course on account of 28...♞xe6, which defends the h6-pawn and simultaneously eliminates the e6-pawn. Black looks absolutely winning, if it was not for 29.♖e3! ♞g6 30.♖g3 ♞e6 31.♖e3!.



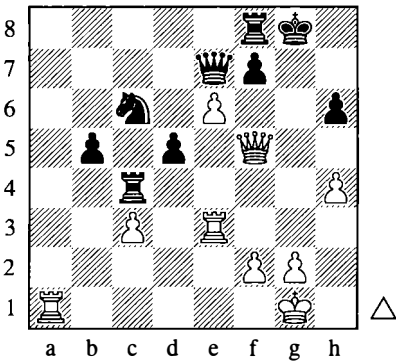
The black queen has to keep her eye on h6 and she has only two squares to do so from. White can for this reason continue to harass her infinitely – or till a draw is claimed. This is a nice illustration of the tactical theme of *big pieces in trouble*, which occurs more frequently in chess than most people notice.

Although this was the intended solution, we should mention that White had another drawing method, which includes first solving his first rank problems by making an air hole on h2 with either 27.h3! or 27.h4!.

The lines are rather fascinating, although they are clearly influenced by computers.

27.h4!? ♖c4

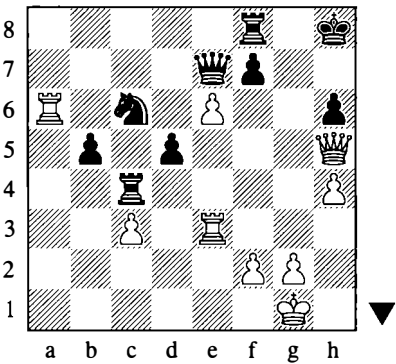
27...fxe6? 28.♖g3† ♕h8 29.♞h5! (29.♞g6? ♞f6!–+) 29...♖f6 30.♖a8† ♕d8 (30...♕h7 31.♞g4+–) 31.♞g4 ♖f8 32.♞g6 ♞f6 33.♞xf6† ♖xf6 34.♖xd8† ♕h7 35.♖d7† ♕h8 36.♖b7±



28.♖a6!!

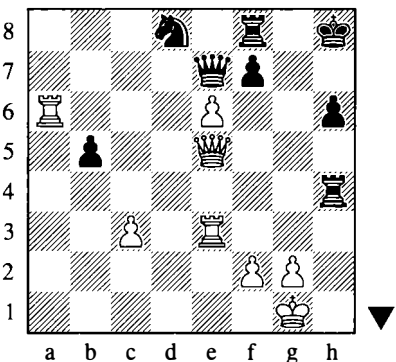
The rook joins the game as it no longer has to look after the first rank.

28.♖g3? ♕h8–+ and 28.♖xd5 fxe6 29.♖xe6 (29.♖xb5 ♖xh4 30.♖g3? ♕h8–+) 29...♖f7± 28...♕h8! 29.♖h5!



29...♖xh4

29...♕h7 30.♖f5! ♕h8= 29...♖f6 30.e7 ♖e8 31.♖xd5 ♖a4 32.♖f3 ♖xf3 33.gxf3 ♖xa6 34.♖xb5 ♖a1! 35.♕h2 ♖xe7 36.♖xc6 ♕g7± 30.♖xd5 ♕d8 31.♖e5!



31...♕h7!

31...f6 32.♖xb5±

32.♖f5! =

27.h3! ♖c4

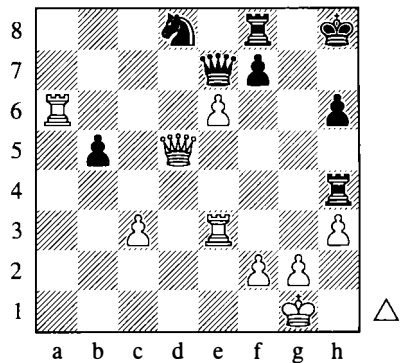
Again this is the critical test.

27...♕d8 28.♖a7+– and 27...d4 28.exf7+– as well as 27...♕h8 28.♖f4 ♖g5 29.e7 ♖e8 30.♖xf7 ♖g8 31.♖h5 ♖xe7 32.♖xe7 ♕xe7 33.♖xh6! ♖h7 34.♖f8! ♖g8 35.♖xe7 all lose for Black.

28.♖a6! ♕h8! 29.♖h5

This time 29...♕h7 30.♖f5! with an immediate draw is forced, as with the pawn on h4, Black does not gain the benefit of taking the h2-square from the white king (*comparison*) if he plays:

29...♖h4?? 30.♖xd5 ♕d8



White has a nice little combination at his disposal.

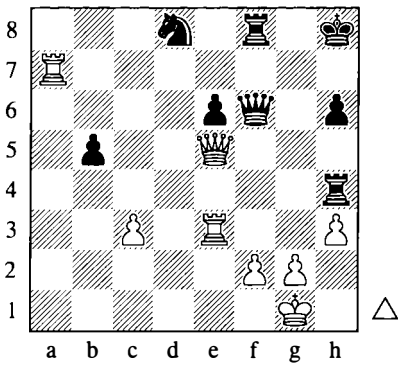
31.♖a7!

The first point is quite easy to see. After 31...♖xa7 32.e7 White wins. The pawn will queen and if it is at d8, the h4-rook will even be picked up at the end of the subsequent exchanges.

31...fxe6

A nice try. Both queens are now hanging, a typical desperado scenario, which means we should look for ways other than the mindless exchange of pieces, especially with a piece less.

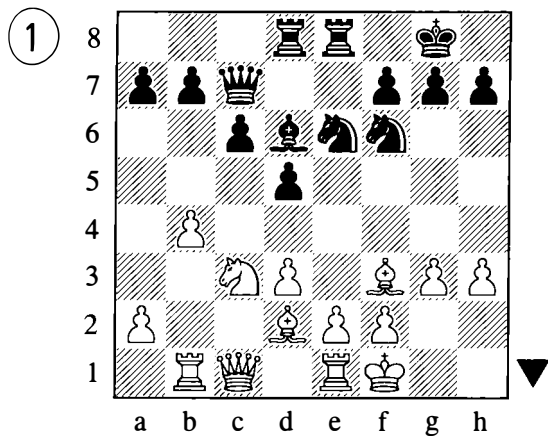
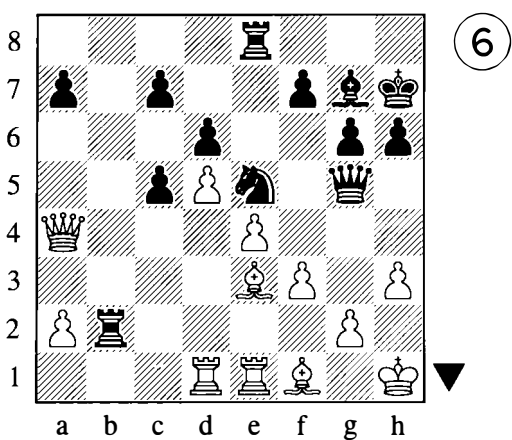
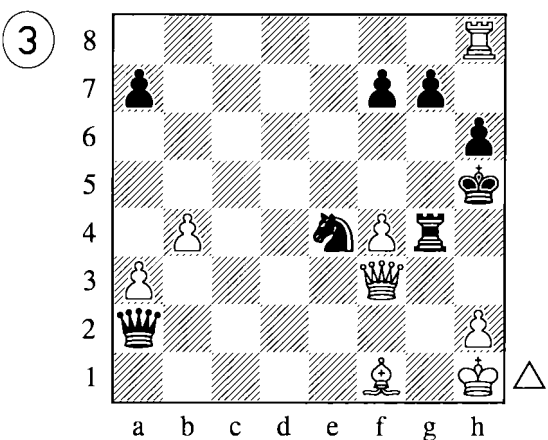
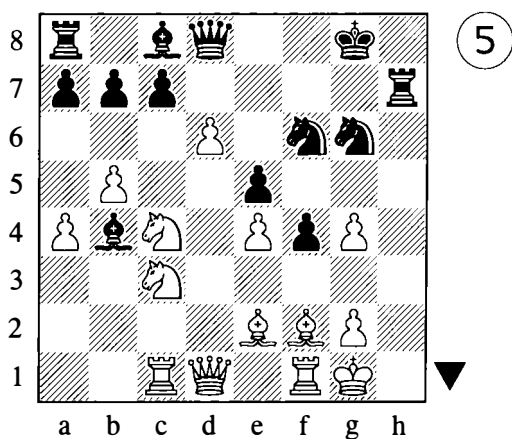
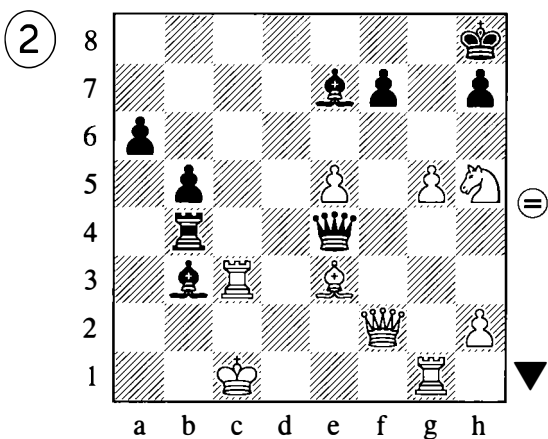
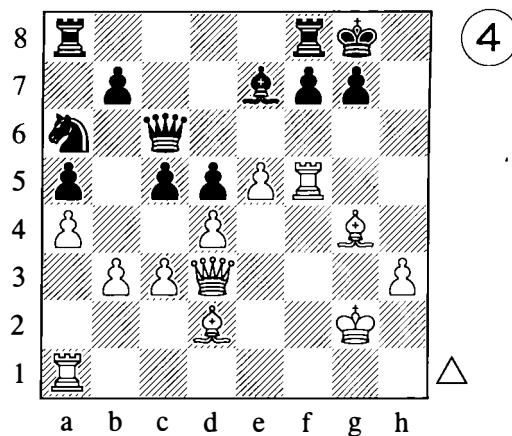
32. ♖e5† ♔f6



33. ♗f3!!

Fedorchuk lost without a fight (maybe he had even resigned in his heart?) in a position where there were still several drawing ideas!

I hope this chapter has managed to inspire you, at least a little. We tend to see imagination as something children possess, when all they do is make up stories about a world they do not understand. Real grown-up imagination is about seeing beyond the collective understanding of the world and in that process extending it. In chess it is about seeing things your opponents would never dream of and in some ways is just another competitive advantage that can be acquired through training. But at the same time, it is so much more...

Gourlay – Conquest, Daventry 2010**A. Zhigalko – Sanikidze, Plovdiv 2010**

1. Gourlay – Conquest, Daventry 2010

18...♙xg3! 19.fxg3 ♖xg3 20.♙g2 Other moves exist, but the h-pawn is hanging! **20...♜h5!** The way the knights come into the game is just brilliant. **21.e3 ♜g5 22.♖d1 22.♞e2 ♜xh3 23.♙e1 ♖h2 24.♙xh3 ♖xh3† 25.♙g1 ♞d6** and Black has a winning attack. **22...♜xh3 23.♖f3 ♞d6!** The final point. The queen cannot be taken and Black wins. **24.♜e2 24.♖xg3 ♜xg3# 24...♜3f4† 25.♙f1 ♜xd3 26.♜e2 ♖h2 27.♙c3 ♞g6 28.♞ed1 ♞xe3 29.♖xe3 ♖xg2#**

2. Opening analysis – Black to draw

I found this while analysing the Sicilian. Black draws nicely with a clearance sacrifice: **34...♞c4!! 35.♞xc4 ♙a3† 36.♜d2 ♙b4†** White cannot escape the perpetual check on account of: **37.♞xb4?? ♖c2† 38.♜e1 ♖d1#**

3. Laznicka – Negi, New Delhi 2011

Black's attack looks deadly until you find a beautiful trick for White: **49.♖xe4! ♖f2 50.♖f5† 50.♖e5† ♜h4 51.♖e7† f6 52.♖xf6†!** comes to the same thing. **50...♜h4 51.♖f6†!!** The point. Black cannot take the queen and thus loses simply. **51...♜h5 52.♖xf7† ♜h4 53.♖e7†** Black resigned. After **53...♜h5 54.♖c5†** White wins. **1–0**

4. A. Zhigalko – Sanikidze, Plovdiv 2010

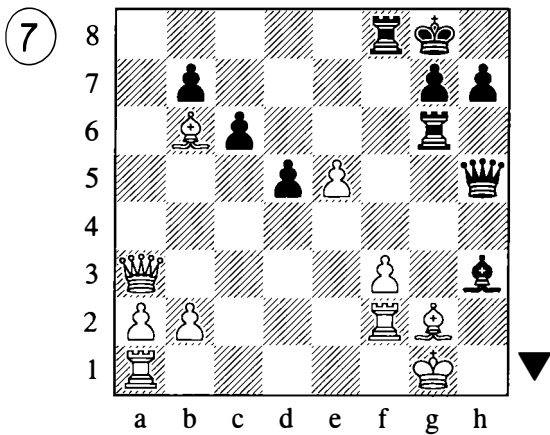
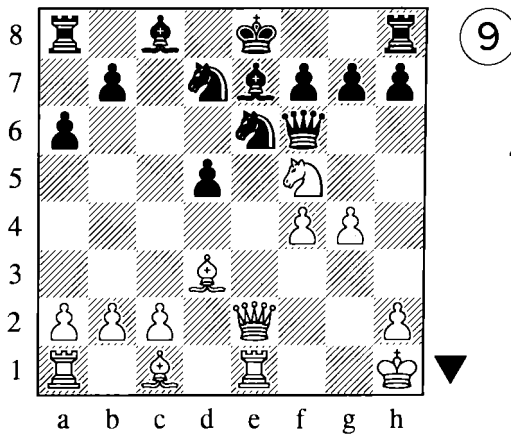
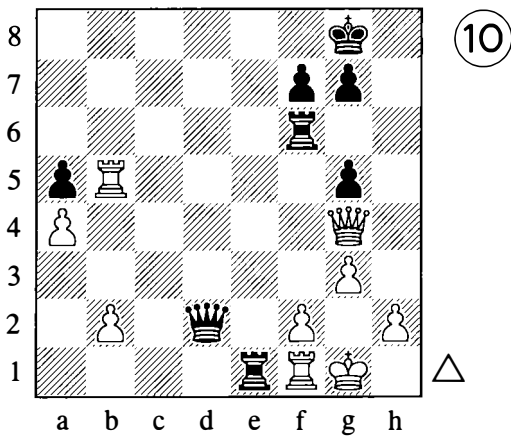
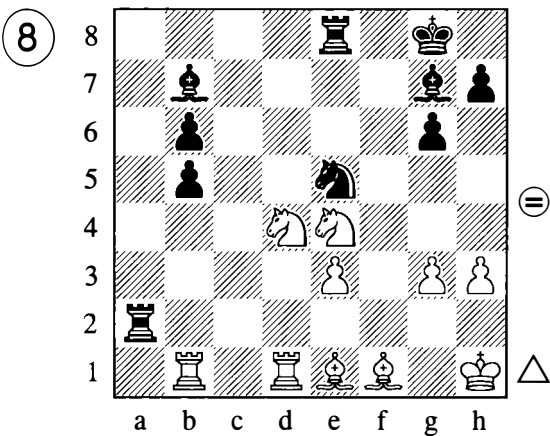
25.e6! **25.♞h5 g6 26.♞h6** was more normal and also quite promising. After **26...c4! 27.bxc4 dxc4† 28.♖f3±** White has good chances. But the move in the game is even stronger. **25...♖xe6!** This leads to a massacre. **25...fxe6** also leaves a blood trail in its wake: **26.♞h5 ♜f7 27.♖f1† ♙f6 (27...♜e8 28.♞xf8† ♙xf8 29.♖g6† ♜d7 30.♖f7† ♙e7 31.♙xe6† ♖xe6 32.♞xd5† and White wins) 28.♙g5!** The black king is under too much pressure. For example, **28...c4 29.♖h7 ♜e8 30.♖g6† ♜d7 31.♞xf6 gxf6 32.♖g7† ♜d6 33.♙f4† e5 34.♙xe5† fxe5 35.♖xe5#**. The best defence was **25...c4 26.exf7† ♞xf7 27.bxc4 dxc4† 28.♖f3 ♖xf3† 29.♞xf3 ♞xf3 30.♙xf3**, although this ending is lost for Black. Compared with the ending arising after **25.♞h5** above, White does not have a stupid rook on h6. **26.♞e1 ♖d6 27.♙f4! 27.♞h5!? g6 28.♞e6!** also wins. **27...♖d8 28.♞h5 g6 28...f5 29.♙xf5** is also hopeless. **29.♙e6!!** A nice shot. **29...♜g7 30.♙h6† ♜h8 31.♙xf7 gxf5 31...♞xf7 32.♖xg6** with mate to follow. **32.♙g7† 1–0**

5. Bykhovsky – Ivanisevic, Tromso 2010

23...♜g7! Clearing a path for the queen; White is busted. **23...♜f7!** looks a bit more natural to me, but the game move works equally well, so who am I to judge? **24.g5 24.g3 ♖h8 25.♙f3** is obviously insufficient. A neat way to end the game would be **25...♜xg4!** with the point: **26.♞e1 ♞h1† 27.♙xh1 ♖h2† 28.♜f1 ♖xf2# 24...♖h8! 25.gxf6† ♜f8 26.♙h5 ♞xh5 27.♖xh5 ♖xh5 28.dxc7 f3 29.g3 ♜f4 0–1**

6. Oms Pallisse – Almeida Quintana, Sabadell 2010

25...♖g3! 26.♖xe8 White allows Black to execute his plan. But also after the more resistant **26.♙g1** Black would win: **26...♞eb8!** (**26...♜xf3?** would send us to the chapter on traps: **27.♞e3!±) 27.♙h2 (27.♞e2 ♞xe2 28.♙xe2 ♞b2 29.♙f1 c4** and Black will win eventually.) **27...♖f2 28.♙g1 ♞xa2!** Black has a decisive advantage. **26...♜xf3! 27.♙g1 ♜xe1** White resigned. The main threat is **...♞xg2**. **0–1**

Bartel – Erdos, Warsaw (var) 2011**Berbatov – M. Nikolov, Bankya 2011****Heemskerk – Nisipeanu, Rogaska Slatina 2011****Zhou Jianchao – Korobov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011**

7. Bartel – Erdos, Warsaw (rapid) (var) 2011

30...♖g3!! It is difficult to see a move along a line that ends before what we have perceived as the focal point. Here the attack is on f3 – and it is absolutely devastating. 30...♖xg2? 31.♖xg2 ♗xg2 32.♗xg2 ♜g5† 33.♗f2 ♜h4† 34.♗g2 does not offer Black anything more than perpetual check. 30...♜g5? 31.♜e3! ♜f4 32.♜d2 (32.♜e2 ♜h4!) 32...♜g3 33.e6! ♜xf3 34.e7 ♜xf2 35.e8=♜† ♜f8 36.♜ee3 ♜g4 37.♜de2 ♜xe2 38.♜xe2 ♖xg2† 39.♜xg2 ♗xg2 40.♗xg2= However, there is a second solutions: 30...♗xg2! 31.♖xg2 ♖xf3! This is also good enough to win. After 32.♜a8† ♜f8 33.♜xb7 h6 the white king is about to be stripped bare and (well, I don't think I can put this in a delicate way) publicly flogged. The variations are just too low brow... **31.♖e1** Other moves offer no greater resistance. 31.♖c1 drops the rook to a check on g5 in the end. 31.♖d1 loses after 31...♗xg2 32.♖xg2 and then, for example: 32...♜h3 33.♖dd2 ♖gxf3 with an obvious double threat. **31...♗xg2 32.♖xg2 ♜h3!** 32...♖gxf3? 33.♜e7! would turn the tables and leave White on top. But Black also has another way to victory in 32...♜h3! 33.♜e3 ♜h1† 34.♗f2 ♜h4† 35.♗e2 ♜c4† 36.♜d3 ♜c1 37.♗f2 ♜xb2† and ...♜xb6. **33.♖ee2 ♖gxf3** The white queen is lost.

8. Heemskerck – Nisipeanu, Rogaska Slatina 2011

White missed an excellent defensive idea: **29.♗g2!** Instead he played 29.♖xb5? ♗xe4† and lost in 42 moves. **29...♖xg2 30.♗d6!!** This fork leaves Black facing instant material losses. 30.♗xg2? ♗xe4† makes no sense, of course. **30...♖xg3!?** His most dangerous continuation, but it is not that dangerous. 30...♗a8 31.♗xe8 leaves Black with nothing better than a perpetual check. **31.♗h2** 31.♗xb7 ♖xh3† 32.♗g2 ♖xe3 33.♗d6 is also equal. **31...♖g2† 32.♗h1 ♖a2† 33.♗xb7 ♗c4 34.♗xb5 ♖xe3 35.♖d8† ♗f8 36.♗b4** White is not worse.

9. Berbatov – M. Nikolov, Bankya 2011

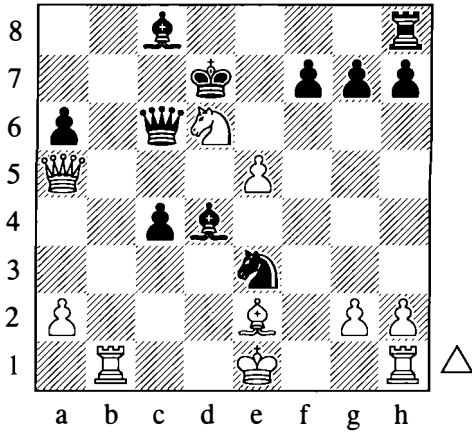
16...♗f8!! This brilliant move seems somewhat, how shall I put this, against the rules. But the issue is that the knight on f5 has no value except to eliminate this defender. And White is threatening 17.g5. Combine these factors and the move is not so surprising – after all, the g7-pawn needs some protection too. In the game White had serious chances after 16...g6? 17.g5 ♜xf5 18.♗xf5 gxf5 19.♜d3±, but lost his way and ended up having to resign on move 36. **17.♗g3** 17.♗e3 ♜d8 18.♗d4 ♗f6 19.g5 ♗e4 20.♗xe4 dxe4 21.♜xe4 ♗d7† and Black is taking over the initiative, although the position is not totally clear. 17.c3 gives Black many good moves. For example: 17...g6 18.♗e3 ♖g8 19.♗g3 ♜h4 20.f5 ♗e5!† Finally, 17.g5 ♜d8 only seems to help Black. **17...♗dc5** 17...♗d8!? might be winning, but it seems rather impractical. **18.g5 ♜d8 19.f5 ♗e7†**

10. Zhou Jianchao – Korobov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

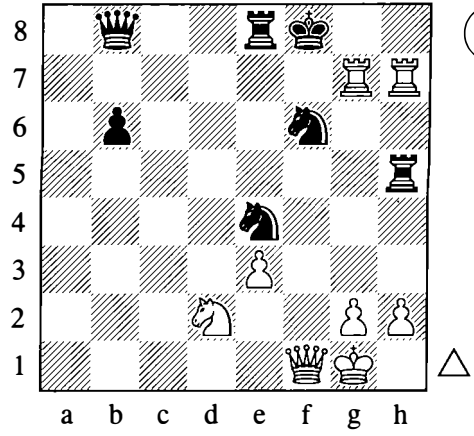
32.♜c8† In the game White played: 32.♖b8†? ♗h7 33.♜h5† ♖h6 34.♜f3 ♖f6 35.♜h5† ♖h6 36.♜f3 ♖f6 37.♜g2 ♖fe6 38.♜f3 White made this move while losing on time. He needed to win the game and might have let his time run out in disappointment at being knocked out. **32...♗h7 33.♜h3† ♗g6** 33...♗g8 34.♖b8† is mate. **34.♖xg5†!!** This is quite surprising, but very strong. **34...♗xg5 35.f4† ♗g6** 35...♖xf4 only makes matters worse. After 36.gxf4† the rook on e1 is lost as well. **36.f5† ♖xf5 36...♗g5 37.♜h4# 37.♜xf5† ♗h6 38.♜xf7 ♖xf1† 39.♜xf1 ♜xb2 40.♜h3† ♗g5 41.♜h4†** White would have real winning chances in this endgame, even if a draw is still the more likely result.

B. Smith – Laznicka, Philadelphia 2010

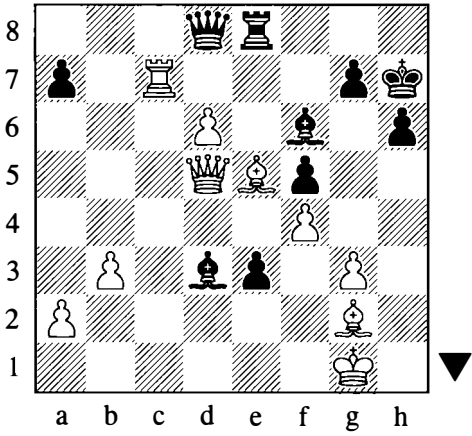
11

**Malakhov – Fier, Montcada 2009**

13

**Wang Hao – Karjakin, Ningbo 2011**

12



11. B. Smith – Laznicka, Philadelphia 2010

White could have achieved a great advantage after: **25.♔d2!!** It is necessary to play this before ♔f3, in order to prevent ...♕xg2†. In the game White was lost after 25.♔f3?! ♕xg2† 26.♔xg2 ♖xg2 27.♖f1?, as can be seen in Candidates Exercise 11 on page 21. (27.♖a4† would still have drawn.) 25.♖f1?! looks strong, but after 25...c3!! Black is okay: 26.♖xf7† ♕e6 27.♔f3 c2 28.♖c1 ♖c3† 29.♖xc3 ♔xc3† 30.♕e2 ♔xe5 31.♕xe3 ♔xd6 The rook is curiously trapped and the position equal after 32.♖f4. **25...♖xg2** This appears to be the only try. 25...♖d8 is useless. For example: 26.♖b8 ♖c7 27.♖xc7† ♕xc7 28.♖xc8† ♖xc8 29.♕xc8 ♕xc8 30.♔xc4 with a winning endgame (even if it takes some time to achieve it). 25...♕e7 26.♖b8 is even worse. **26.♖hg1 ♖xh2** 26...♖d5 27.♖xd5 ♕xd5 28.♖gf1 is just an exchange up. **27.♕xc8 ♔xe5** 27...♖xc8 loses directly to 28.♖b7† ♕e8 29.♖a4† ♕f8 30.♖xf7†! and everything goes with check. **28.♖b7†!** 28.♖a4†?! ♕xc8 29.♖xa6† ♕d7 30.♖b7† ♔c7 31.♖a4† ♕d8 does not offer White more than perpetual check. **28...♕xc8 29.♖c5†! ♔c7 30.♖xc7† ♖xc7 31.♖xe3±**

12. Wang Hao – Karjakin, Ningbo 2011

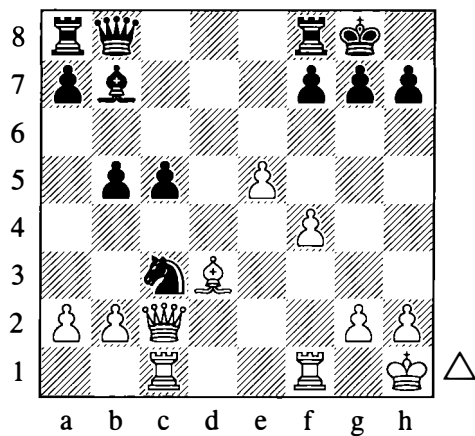
40...♔xe5! In the game Black lost after 40...♔a6?? 41.♖f7!! ♖xe5 42.fxe5 e2 43.♕f2 ♖b8 44.♔b7! 1–0 Black can also play 40...e2! 41.♖c1 ♔xe5 42.♖xd3 ♔xd6, transposing to our main line. **41.♖xd3** 41.fxe5 e2 42.♕f2 is not a real sideline. Black wins with 42...♖g5!!, threatening to come in at d2 or to queen the pawn immediately, with a mating attack. 43.♖xd3 ♖xe5 44.♕e1 ♖e3 **41...e2! 42.♖c1 ♔xd6 43.♖xf5†** 43.♖e1 ♔c5† and wins. **43...g6 44.♖f7† ♕h8 45.♖e1 ♔b4 46.♖xg6 ♖b6†** Simplest. **47.♖xb6 axb6 48.♕f2 ♔xe1† 49.♕xe1 ♖e3** Black will win the endgame; White is paralysed.

13. Malakhov – Fier, Montcada 2009

41.♖g3! White did not manage to find this way of keeping the initiative. The game was drawn after: 41.♖f7† ♕g8 42.♖fg7† ♕f8 43.♖f7† ♕g8 44.♖hg7† ♕h8 45.♖c7 ♖d8 46.♕xe4 ♕xe4 47.♖gf7 ♖d6 48.h3 ♖a3 49.♖f4 ♖a1† 50.♕h2 ♖e5 51.♖xe5† ½–½ **41...♖xh2** The best try in my estimation. 41...♖xh7?! 42.♕xe4 ♖f7 43.♕xf6 ♖d8 44.♖g8† ♕e7 45.♕d5†! and White wins. 41...♖xg3 42.hxg3 ♖xh7 43.♕xe4 ♖xe4 44.♖xf6† ♖f7 45.♖xb6 looks like a very difficult ending for Black. **42.♕xe4 ♖xh7 43.♖xf6† ♖f7 44.♖h6† ♕e7 45.♖h4† ♕d7 46.♕f6† ♖xf6 47.♖g7† ♖e7 48.♖xf6 ♖xg7 49.♖xg7† ♕e6 50.♕f2±** White has serious winning chances.

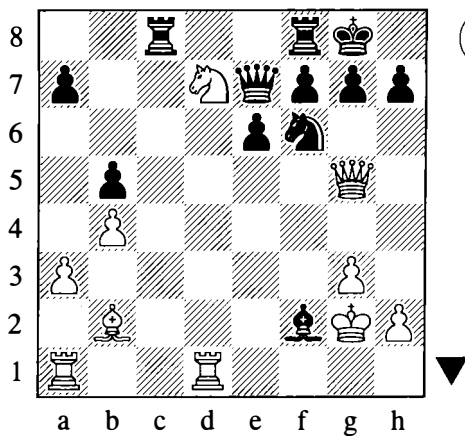
Gagunashvili – Zhang Zhong, Jakarta 2011

14



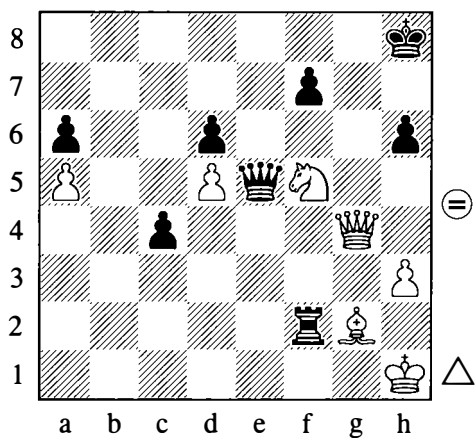
Kaspret – Halvax, Austria 2012

16



A. Smirnov – Volodin, Tallinn (rapid) 2011

15



14. Gagunashvili – Zhang Zhong, Jakarta 2011

White missed a strong move on the previous move, according to his annotations in *Chess Informant*. But he also had a chance to win the game here, with a brilliant idea: **20. ♖xh7!** The game went 20.bxc3? g6± and was drawn in 33 moves. **20... ♖h8 21. ♖d3!!** This intends the surprising transfer of the queen to h3 with a winning attack. There are now a number of lines, but no way to save the game. 21.bxc3 g6 22. ♖xg6 fxg6 23. ♖xg6 ♖c7 24. ♖cd1 ♖g8 25. ♖h6† ♖h7 26. ♖xh7† ♖xh7 27. ♖d7† ♖g7 28. ♖xg7† ♖xg7 29. ♖d1 ♖g6 with even chances in the ending – if White is lucky. **21... ♖xg2†!** This is the best chance, though probably insufficient. 21... ♖xa2 22. ♖h3 ♖d8 has the idea of taking on g2 and achieving counterplay with ... ♖d2†. White's best computer move is 23. ♖ce1 with e5–e6 ideas, but simplest is 23. ♖cd1, when taking on g2 achieves nothing (the king just takes) and Black loses quickly after normal play: 23... ♖b4 24. ♖g6† ♖g8 25. ♖h7† ♖f8 26. ♖h8† ♖e7 27. ♖xg7 ♖f8 28. ♖f6† ♖e8 29. ♖e6# Playing 21... ♖d8 22. ♖h3 ♖d5 would not hold up against the obvious 23. ♖g6†, but White has no need to go for an immediate shoot-out. He can improve his attack with 23.f5! c4 24. ♖g6† ♖g8 25. ♖h7† ♖f8 26.f6! ♖e8 27.e6! and Black is not being mated, but rather being murdered. 21...g6 22. ♖h3 ♖g7 is an important idea to be aware of. White wins after 23.f5!. For example, 23...gxf5 24. ♖xc3 with an obvious attack. **22. ♖xg2 ♖b7† 23. ♖f2 ♖b6 24. ♖h3 c4† 25. ♖f3 ♖h6 26. ♖xh6 gxf6 27. ♖f5 ♖xa2 28. ♖cd1! ♖ad8 28... ♖b4 29. ♖d6** is also catastrophic. **29. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 30. ♖a1 ♖b4 31. ♖xa7 ♖g8 32. ♖b7** The endgame should win for White.

15. A. Smirnov – Volodin, Tallinn (rapid) 2011

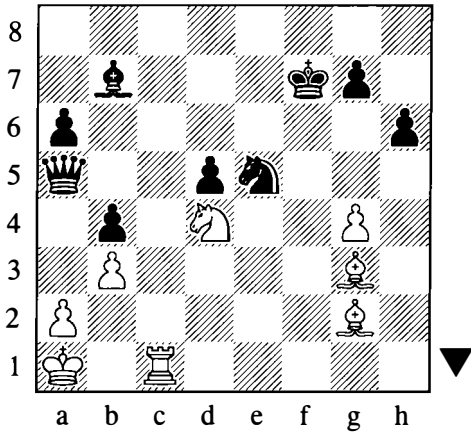
49. ♖xh6! Following 49. ♖g3? White lost on move 54 after mutual mistakes. Black could have replied 49...c3! and White would probably have had to resign before move 54! **49... ♖h7** Black can play for a win with 49... ♖g7 50. ♖c8† ♖h7 51. ♖g4 ♖f4∞, but I doubt whether he is better in any shape or form. **50. ♖f5!!** This is the great point. **50... ♖xf5 50... ♖e2 51. ♖h5† ♖g8 52. ♖g5†** is a draw on account of 52... ♖f8?? 53. ♖d8† ♖e8 54. ♖xd6† ♖g8 55. ♖g3† with mate on the next move. **51. ♖e4!** Black needs to take the perpetual now.

16. Kaspret – Halvax, Austria 2012

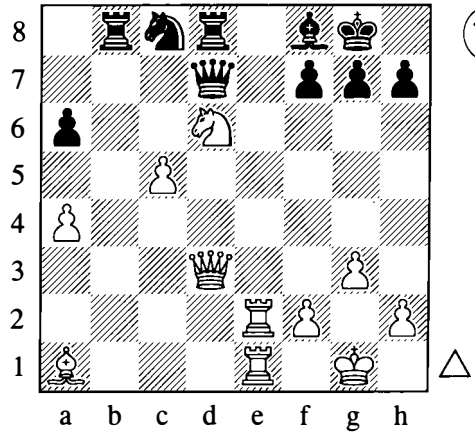
24... ♖c2 24... ♖h8? is just poor. For example: 25. ♖xf8 or 25. ♖xf6!? gxf6 26. ♖h6 ♖c2 27. ♖h3 ♖g8 28. ♖xf6 ♖g7 29. ♖d7 ♖f8 30. ♖h5 (threatening ♖d8!) 30... ♖b6 31. ♖ad1 ♖c8 White can do as he pleases here. Simplest is probably to attack f7. 32. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 33. ♖h5 ♖f8 34. ♖f1 and wins, on account of 34... ♖g8 35. ♖f4!. **25. ♖xf6† 25. ♖xf6 ♖d4†** is easy to understand. After 26. ♖h3 ♖xf6 27. ♖xf6† ♖xf6 28. ♖xf6 gxf6 29. ♖d7 a6 30. ♖d6 ♖g7 31. ♖xa6 ♖d8 Black's active rooks and extra pawn will win the game. **25... ♖h8 26. ♖d2** This is the best defence and also the line where the main idea is disclosed. 26. ♖h3 ♖xb2 27. ♖xh7 ♖xg5 28. ♖xg5 ♖e3–+ was what happened in the actual game. Black won on move 45. **26... ♖xb2! 27. ♖xb2 ♖d4** Black is a rook down, but all will be won back with interest. White has only one choice: **28. ♖xh7 ♖xg5 29. ♖xg5 ♖xb2 30. ♖b1 ♖xa3 31. ♖a1 ♖xb4 32. ♖xa7 ♖g8 33. ♖b7** White has some practical saving chances in this ending due to his activity, but I would put my money on the two connected pawns in the centre. Still, the technique required will be considerable, with the possibility of a rook and bishop vs. rook ending being on the horizon.

Bartel – Zagorskis, Porto Carras 2011

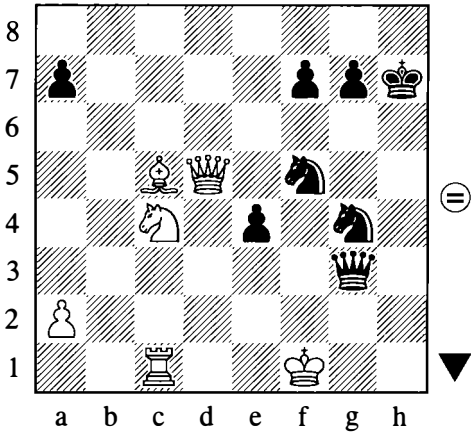
17

**Aronian – Grischuk, Kazan (1.7 – rapid) 2011**

19

**Nakamura – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 2011**

18



17. Bartel – Zagorskis, Porto Carras 2011

White is threatening ♖c7 (unless Black allows ♖xe5!) and Black has to do something about it. The answer is brilliant. **32...♟c4!!** 32...♟xg4?? 33.♙c7! ♖a3 34.♜f1† ♟g6 35.♟c2 shows the kind of pressure Black is under. The game continued: 32...♟d3? 33.♙c7! ♖a3 34.♜c2 ♟e8 (34...♟e1 is answered by 35.♟b1!, but Black could try 34...g5!?) 35.♟b1 ♟d7 36.♙f1? (36.♙b6! with the threat of ♙f1 would have decided the game. For example: 36...♟e1 37.♜c7† ♟d6 38.♟f5† ♟e5 39.♜e7† and White picks up the knight without offering Black any counterplay. ♟f5-d4-c2 is still on its way.) 1–0 Presumably Black lost on time here. After 36...♟f2! the game would go on. **33.bxc4** White does not have any better tries. 33.♟f5 is not great. Black can, for example, play 33...g6 with the idea 34.♟xh6† ♟g7 35.g5 ♖b6! 36.bxc4 ♖d4† 37.♟b1 ♖d3† and the g3-bishop is gone. 33.♟e2 does not improve things for White. The queen has b5 at her disposal now. 33...♟g8! is probably best, preparing ...♟a3. For example: 34.bxc4 b3 35.♟c3 d4 winning. 33.♙h2 is killed off by 33...♖d8! among others. The following line just shows how badly things are going: 34.bxc4 dxc4 35.♙xb7 ♖xd4† 36.♟b1 ♖d3† 37.♟a1 c3 38.♙f4 ♖d4 with a deadly double threat. **33...dxc4 34.♙f1!** Absolutely forced. 34.♙xb7 b3 35.♙f1† ♟g8 36.♜f2 ♖c3† and Black starts picking the white position apart. **34...c3!** 34...♙d5!? 35.♙xc4 ♙xc4 36.♜xc4 ♟g8! is also unpleasant for White, but the text is stronger. **35.♙c4† ♟g6!** 35...♙d5? 36.♟b3!+– **36.♙d3† ♟g5** Black has good winning chances in this messy position. The following appears to be largely forced. **37.♜f1 ♙d5! 38.♙f4† ♟h4! 39.♜f2** This position continues in exercise 26 on page 197.

18. Nakamura – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 2011

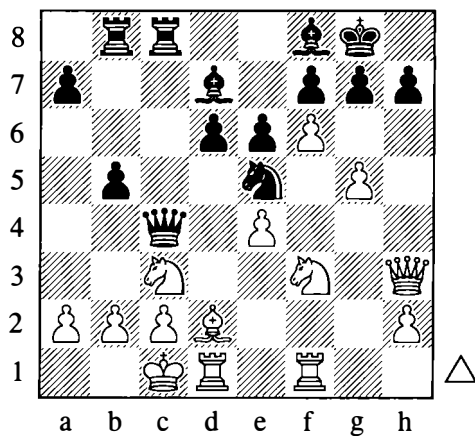
Ivanchuk was out of time and had to guess randomly what check would give him a chance of surviving. **40...♟h2†** Instead Ivanchuk played 40...♖f3†?, after which White is more or less winning: 41.♟e1± ♟g3 42.♜c2 f5 43.♟d2 ♟f6 44.♖d8 ♟e2 45.♟e1 f4 46.♜xe2 ♖c3† 47.♟d1 ♖xc4 48.♖d4 ♖b5 49.♜h2† ♟g6 50.♟c2 a5 51.♙e7 ♖c6† 52.♖c5 ♖a4† 53.♟c1 f3 54.♙xf6 ♟xf6 55.♜d2 g6 56.♜d6† ♟g7 57.♜d8 1–0 **41.♟e2 ♟d4†!!** This is a difficult move to spot, but had Ivanchuk guessed correctly on the previous move, he would have found this one for sure. **42.♖xd4 ♖g4† 43.♟e3 ♖g3† 44.♟xe4 ♖f3† 45.♟e5 ♖f6†** with a glorious perpetual. Being short of time Ivanchuk simply rolled the dice and crapped out.

19. Aronian – Grischuk, Kazan (1.7 – rapid) 2011

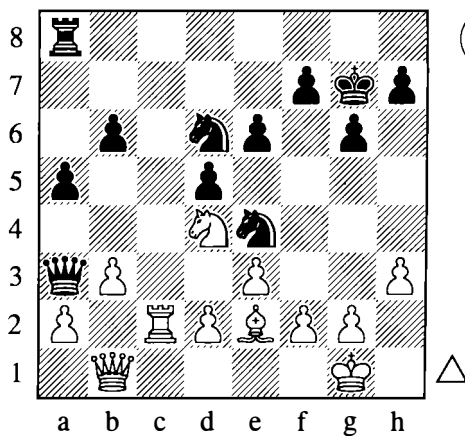
31.♖c3!! The threat of ♜e7, should the black knight move, can be hard to spot. White played 31.♙e5?± and failed to win the game. It was drawn on move 61 and Aronian was eventually knocked out. 31.♖xa6?! ♟xd6 32.cxd6 ♖a8 33.♖d3 ♖xd6± also gives Black hopes of surviving. **31...♟xd6** Black is lost for moves here. 31...♖xa4 32.♟xf7! ♟xf7 33.♜e4 ♖c6 (33...♖d7 34.c6 and wins) 34.♜f4† ♟g8 35.♜xf8†! with mate to follow. 31...♖c6 32.♟xf7! ♟xf7 33.♖c4† ♖d5 34.♖f4† and White picks up the rook on b8. **32.c6 ♖c7** Objectively tougher is 32...♖g4 33.c7 ♖xa4, but this is hardly going to worry White. A possible win is 34.♜e5! ♟b5 35.cxb8=♖ ♜xb8 36.♖c6 and White is in control and still attacking. **33.♜e7!** White wins.

Hou Yifan – Sebag, Hangzhou 2011

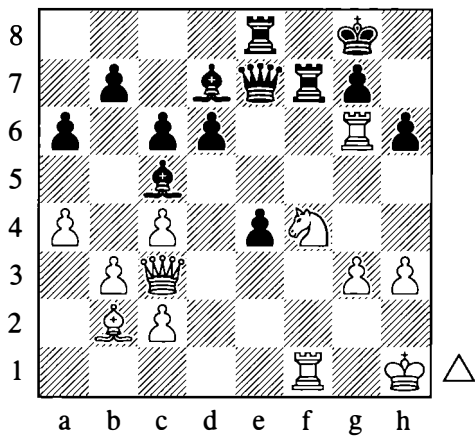
(20)

**Roiz – Le Roux, Gibraltar 2011**

(22)

**Jaracz – Bartel, Warsaw (rapid) 2011**

(21)



20. Hou Yifan – Sebag, Hangzhou 2011

I have always had a fascination with this combination. **21.g6!!** Clearance. The knight comes to g5 with decisive effect. **21...fxg6** 21...hxg6 22.♖g5 is simple. 21...♖xg6 22.♖g5 h6 is less so, but Black is just busted after 23.♖xf7!. Following 23...♗xg7 24.fxg7† ♗xg7 25.♖g1, the attack is obviously decisive. And the attempt 23...e5 is met with either 24.♖xh6† gxh6 25.♗xd7, or simply 24.♗xd7 ♗xf7 25.♗h3! with a winning attack. The d5-square comes in handy. 25...gxf6 26.♖d5 ♖f4 27.♗xf4 exf4 28.♗xf4 ♖g7 29.♖g1 ♗h8 30.♗xf6! is a good example of what could happen. **22.♖xe5 dxe5 23.f7† ♗h8 24.♖f3!** Threatening ♗xh7†!. **24...h6** 24...g5 was possible, but White has enough time: 25.♗g4 ♖c6 26.♖h3 h6 27.♗xg5 and mate is near. **25.♗xh6!** Many moves win, but this is strong and direct. 25.♖g1 ♗h7 26.♗g4 g5 27.♗xg5 would have been the way I would have done it. **25...gxh6 26.♗g4?!** I consider this poor attacking technique. Bring in the last rook please! 26.♖g1! ♗h7 27.♗xg6! runs straight through without the need of calculation. **26...g5?!** This makes White's job easier. 26...♗g7! was critical. White still has a winning attack with 27.♖g1 g5 28.♗h5 ♖e7 29.h4!, but to me this is not efficient technique. 29...♗d4! 30.♖gf1!! ♖f8 31.♖g3! ♗h7 32.♖ff3! and Black is forced to play something silly like 32...♖g8 to avoid immediate mate. (32.hxg5 ♗xg5† 33.♗b1 ♗d2 34.♖h1 also wins.) **27.♗h5 ♗g7 28.♖h3 28.♖g1 ♖e7 29.h4** still wins. **28...♗f6 29.♖xd7 b4 30.♗xh6† ♗xh6 31.♖xh6† ♗g7 32.f8=♗† 1-0**

21. Jaracz – Bartel, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

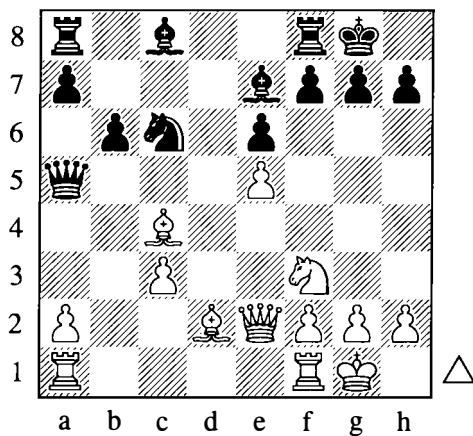
White missed a combination of historic proportions. **25.♖xg7†!!** Clearance and weakening of the kingside at the same time. Instead White played 25.♖xh6?!, when Black wins in any number of way, most convincingly 25...♗g5!. He found another way and delayed taking the full point till move 32. **25...♖xg7 26.♖g6! ♗xh3!?** The trickiest move. 26...♗e5! is objectively the best chance. But White is close to winning after 27.♖xe5 dxe5 28.♗a5! ♗xh3 29.♖f6 ♖e3 30.♗xe5 ♖g4 31.♗g2±. After 26...e3 27.♖xe7† ♖xe7 28.b4 White also wins, though not quickly. **27.♖xe7† ♖xe7** This looks like counterplay, but White has an elegant winning line. **28.♖f4!! e3 29.♖e4 ♖f5 29...a5 30.♗f6!** and it is over more or less immediately. **30.♖xe7 ♖xe7 31.♗h8† ♗f7 32.♗f6† ♗e8 33.♗xf5 e2 34.♖c3** White wins.

22. Roiz – Le Roux, Gibraltar 2011

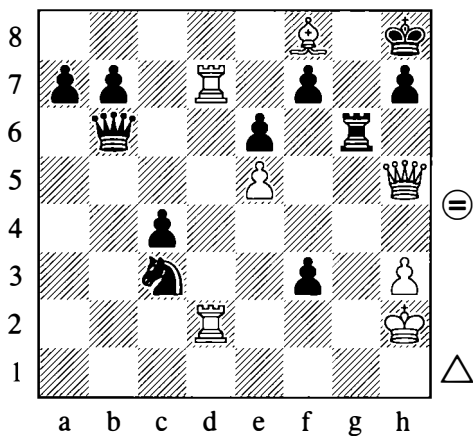
The Israeli grandmaster Michael Roiz writes beautifully and honestly about his own games. I always check his annotations to see if there is anything I can use. Here he missed a chance to trap the opponent's queen with a beautiful sequence. **28.♗a1!!** Instead he won the game after: 28.♖c6?! ♖f5 29.♖b5?! (29.♖xf5† gxf5 30.♗a1† ♗g6 31.f3 ♖c5 32.g4±) 29...♗e7 (29...♗b4 30.a3 ♗e7 31.♗b2† ♗g8±) 30.♗b2† ♗h6? (After 30...♗g8± the outcome of the game would have remained unclear.) 31.d3 ♖c5? (31...♖ed6 32.♖xd6 ♖xd6 33.♖xb6 should win, but good technique is required.) 32.♖c7 ♗e8 33.g4! ♗xb5 34.♗f6! ♖e4 35.dxe4 ♗xe2 36.exf5 1-0 **28...♗g8** The knight cannot just retreat. White wins quickly after 28...♖f6 29.g4! h6 30.h4 g5 31.f4! when Black cannot avoid losing something pretty soon. For example: 31...♗g6 32.h5† ♗g7 33.fxg5 hxg5 34.♖xe6† fxe6 35.♖c7† with a mating attack. **29.d3 ♖c5** The human move to which you need to see the solution. In his annotations Roiz only gave the computer's move, 29...♖f6, when White just plays 30.♖xe6. Black does not have any real saving chances – even if this might be objectively best. **30.♖c3!!** Black's queen is trapped. White plays ♖c2 and emerges at least a piece up.

Krasilnikov – Sadykov, Chelyabinsk 2004

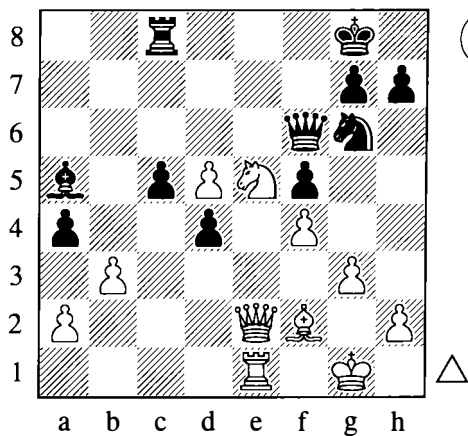
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**Rendle – Howell, Hastings 2011**

24

**Morozevich – Eljanov, Saratov 2011**

25



23. Krasilnikov – Sadykov, Chelyabinsk 2004

The black queen can be trapped. **14.♙b5!** 14.a3 a6!± is less dangerous. **14...♙b7 15.a3!!** Taking the a3-square away from the queen as well as taking control over b4. **15...♟fd8** At this point White should have played differently than he did. **16.♙e1!** This would have won the game. White is planning c3-c4 and there is no sensible way of preventing it. The game continued: 16.♟d4?! ♟ac8 17.♟b3?! (17.♙e1!±) 17...♟xd2 18.♟xa5 ♟xe2 19.♟xc6 ♟xc6 (19...♙xc6 20.♙xe2 ♙a4±) 20.♙xe2 ♟xc3 21.♟ac1 ♟xc1 22.♟xc1 ♙xa3 23.♟c7 ♙d5 24.♟xa7 ♙c5± Black held this endgame with great tenacity. White has a large advantage here, but he did not manage to make it felt, even though he tried all the way to move 20! **16...♙xa3 17.♟g5!!** This is not the simplest way to win; however, it is very impressive. 17.♟d4?! is less convincing: 17...♟xd4! 18.cxd4 ♟b4 19.♙d2 a6 20.♟fb1 ♟xb5 21.♟xb5 axb5 22.♙xb4 ♙xb4 23.♟xa8† ♙xa8 24.♟xb4 ♙c6 should win for White. Compared to the game Black is left with the wrong bishop. Still a bit of technique is required. But another way of winning does exist: 17.c4! ♟b4 18.♟d2 and now both 18...♟c2 19.♟b3 and 18...♟xd2 19.♙xd2 a6 20.♙c1! win for White. **17...h6 17...a6 18.c4 ♟b4 19.♟h5** and the black kingside is torn apart. **18.♟xf7! ♟xf7 18...♟f8 19.♟d6** and White wins. **19.♟f3† ♟g8 20.c4 ♟b4 21.♟xb7 a6 22.♙d7** Black has not lost material yet, but it is easy to see that it won't be too long before he does.

24. Rendle – Howell, Hastings 2011

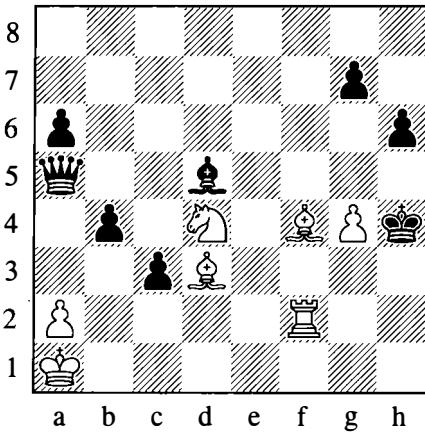
White missed his chance to make it into the books as a hero, as he failed to find the drawing combination. **34.♙g7†!!** White lost quickly after: 34.♟7d4? ♟e2! 35.♟xf3 ♟xd4 36.♟e3 ♟f3† 0–1 **34...♟g8 34...♟xg7 35.♟xf7† ♟xf7 36.♟xh7† ♟g7 37.♟d7† ♟e8 38.♟xg7** would win if Black did not have 38...♟f2†=. **35.♟xg6!!** Obviously this was the idea. **35...hxc6! 35...fxg6?** would even put the black king in danger! White can claim a serious edge after 36.♙h6 ♟d5 37.♟g7† ♟h8 38.♟f7! ♟c5 39.♟f8† ♟xf8 40.♙xf8, although the ending is rather complicated. **36.♙f6 g5 37.♟d8† ♟h7 38.♟h8† ♟g6 39.♟g8† ♟f5 40.♟xg5† ♟e4 41.♟g4†** White draws with perpetual check, as Black is unlikely to walk straight into: **41...♟e3?? 42.♙g5#**

25. Morozevich – Eljanov, Saratov 2011

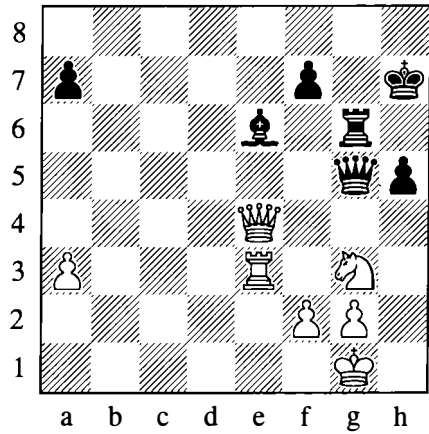
Morozevich is maybe the most inventive grandmaster today. Here he would have an edge after 34.♟b1, but found something much more convincing. **34.♟c4!! ♟d6** Eljanov believes his opponent. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. White wins elegantly after: 34...♙xe1 35.d6† ♟h8 36.♟f7† ♟g8 37.d7! This attractive move is the only difficult one to see. 37...♙xf2† 38.♟xf2 ♟f8 39.d8=♟ ♟xd8 40.♟xd8† ♟h8 (40...♟f8 41.♟e6† is even worse.) 41.♟f7† ♟g8 White is obviously doing well here, but he also has to find the best way forward. 42.♟g5† ♟h8 43.♟e6! The human way to win. The endgame after 43...♟xe6 44.♟xe6 axb3 45.axb3 ♟e7 46.♟xc5 wins because of positional factors. **35.♟e2** The benefit of being able to keep the rook in the e-file might seem minor at first, but just keep an eye on the damage it can do! **35...axb3 35...♙c3 36.♟c6! ♟a8 37.♟e6** and White wins quicker than you might have expected. **36.axb3 ♟e7 36...♙c3 37.♟c6** followed by ♟e6 just wins. 36...♟e8 37.♟b5 ♟a8 38.♟c4 ♟d8 is obviously hopeless. Maybe 39.♟c6 is best here – or maybe I shouldn't worry about comparing wins!? **37.♟b5! ♙b4** White also wins material after 37...♙c7 38.♟c4 ♟d8 39.d6! ♙xd6 40.♟e6 ♙b8 41.♟b6 because of: 41...♟c7 42.♟d6!! ♟xd6 (42...♟f8 43.♟d7) 43.♟e8# **38.♟c4 ♟d8 39.d6 ♟c6 40.♟e5 ♟xe5 41.fxe5 1–0**

Bartel – Zagorskis, Porto Carras 2011

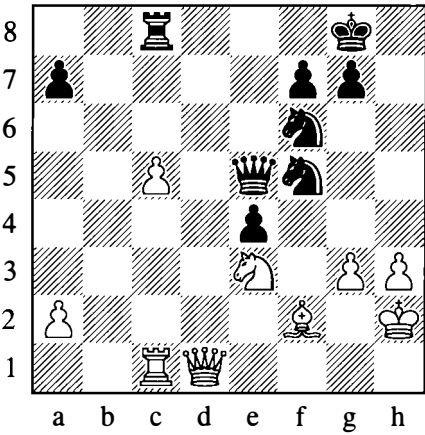
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**Lysyj – Lu Shanglei, Moscow 2012**

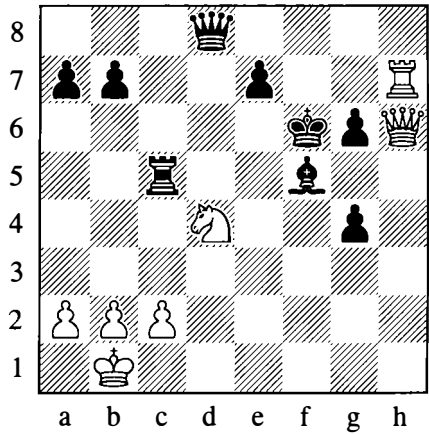
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**Nakamura – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 2011****Ant. Pavlidis – Ana. Pavlidis, Chania (var) 2011**

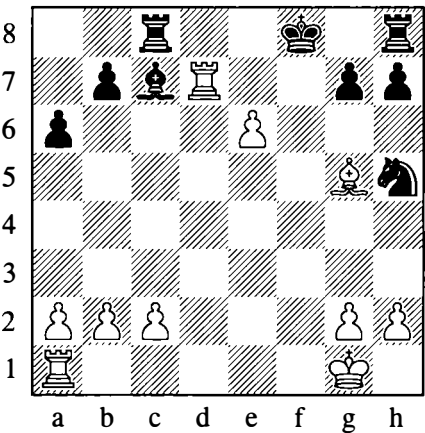
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30

**Armanda – Kozul, Sibenik 2011**

28



26. Bartel – Zagorskis, Porto Carras (var) 2011

39...c2!! The only move – and a very attractive one. After **39...b3 40.♟f5†** White wins – compare it with the main line. **40.♟f5† ♙h3 41.♙f1† ♙xg4 42.♟e3† ♙h5 43.♙e2† ♙g6 44.♙d3† ♙f7** Here it is important that **45.♙c7†** does not win, as would be the case had **39...b3** been played. **45.♟xd5 ♙xd5 46.♙g3† ♙g8 47.♙xc2 ♙c5 48.♙b1 g5†**

27. Nakamura – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 2011

Ivanchuk saw the beginning of the combination, but did not follow through. **33...♙xc5!! 34.♟c4** White is testing his opponent, which could be criticized objectively, even though the ending after **34.♙xc5 ♙xc5†** is awful. **34...♙c7 35.♙xc5 ♙xg3† 36.♙h1 ♙xh3† 37.♙g1 ♙g3†?** Ivanchuk misses a great winning chance. **37...♟g4! 38.♙e2 ♟h4 39.♟d2** and now: **39...♙g3†!** (39...♟f3†? would be too soon. **40.♟xf3 exf3 41.♙e8† ♙h7 42.♙e4† g6! 43.♙c2! ♙g3† 44.♙f1** and the ending will be a draw.) **40.♙h1 ♟f3 41.♟xf3 exf3 42.♙e8† ♙h7 43.♙e4† g6 44.♙c2 f2** and Black wins the ending. **38.♙f1 ♟g4 38...e3! 39.♙d8† ♙h7 40.♙d5** We have reached Exercise 18.

28. Armand – Kozul, Sibenik 2011

White is obviously better, but the conclusion is very hard to spot. **24.♙f1†!** This is a slightly surprising check, but it forces the knight to f6. In the game White's advantage gradually evaporated: **24.♙ad1?± ♟f6 25.♙f7† ♙e8 26.♙xg7 ♙b6† 27.♙h1 ♟e4 28.♙e7† ♙f8 29.♙f1† ♟f2† 30.♙xf2†!** (Stronger was **30.♙g1 ♙c5 31.♙xb7 ♙e8 32.♙h4±**, but already White's advantage is not as much as it was and with a downward trend, the practical decision of taking the draw was the right one by the lower rated player.) **30...♙xf2 31.♙f7† ♙e8 32.♙e7† ♙f8 33.♙f7† ♙e8 34.♙e7† ½-½ 24...♟f6 24...♙g8** is the most natural reply, but White wins instantly with **25.♙xc7! ♙xc7 26.♙d8!!** and Black will have to return the rook. **25.♙f7† ♙g8 25...♙e8 26.♙xg7** is obviously hopeless to me, but I will add a few moves just to make it clear to the pedants: **26...♙b6† 27.♙h1 ♟d5 28.♙d7** and now, for example, **28...♙d8 29.♙xd8 ♙xd8 30.♙xd8† ♙xd8 31.♙d1** with an easy win. **26.♙1xf6! gxf6 27.♙h6** The threat is **♙g7†** and so on – a typical windmill. **27...♙b6†** This is the “best” defence. **28.♙f1 ♙d8 29.♙g7† ♙f8 30.e7† ♙e8 31.exd8=♙† ♙xd8 32.♙xb7** White wins.

29. Lysyj – Lu Shanglei, Moscow 2012

Black has a fantastic win at his disposal. **33...h4! 34.f4 34.♟e2 ♙d5** and Black wins. **34...♙c5!** This is the beautiful point. In the game Black missed the win with **34...♙g4?** and was a bit worse after **35.f5±**, the game eventually being drawn in 48 moves. **35.f5 35.♟e2 ♙d5** was probably easy enough to see. **35...♙g4!!** It was certainly this move that Black had missed! And what a glorious move it is. **36.♙xg4 36.♙e5 ♙d5!** and wins. **36.♙d3** allows Black a few wins. **36...♙c4 37.♟e4 ♙b6!** is one. Another is **36...hxc3 37.fxc6† f5 38.♙f1 ♙d4** and White is killed on the back rank. **36...♙xe3† 37.♙h1** Now **37...hxc3** is objectively best, but most people would just play **37...♙e1†!** and win with the extra piece.

30. Ant. Pavlidis – Ana. Pavlidis, Chania (var) 2011

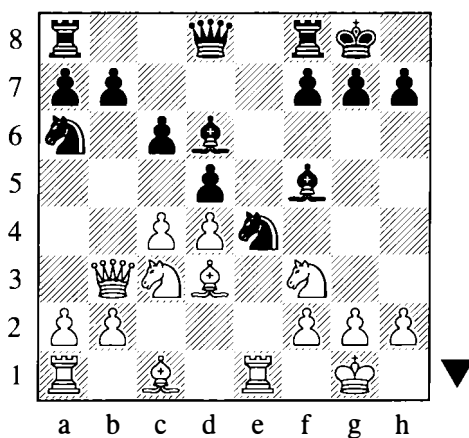
28...♙xc2†!! **28...♙xc2?** would allow White to get away with a draw after **29.♙g7† ♙g5 30.♙h6†**, while he would get away with murder after **28...♙xd4?? 29.♙g7† ♙g5 30.♙xd4 ♙xc2 31.♙e3† ♙f6 32.♙xe7#**. **29.♟xc2 29.♙a1** is possible, but here Black is winning after the following stunning idea: **29...♙e5!!** The king is completely safe and the knight is just lost. **30.♙g7† ♙e4 31.♙xg6† ♙xd4 32.♙xg4† ♙e4** Over and out. **29...♙d1† 30.♙c1 ♙xcl† 31.♙xcl** This might look less than clear. For example, **31...g3** only leads to a draw in my estimation. But Black can repair his structure with **31...♙h5!!** and win the ending easily with three passed pawns for the knight.

Chapter 8

Traps

Vasily Emelin – Boris Avrukh

Alma-Ata 1991



Black to play

Boris Avrukh found a nice trick here with Black that won a pawn. Although it should not have led to an advantage, his opponent suddenly faced quite unexpected problems and was not up to solving them in the most energetic form.

Setting a trap in chess is one of the least respected skills – and at the same time one of the most effective. How many times have I heard an opponent complain that he was “much better” and that I would not have won the game, had it not been for the “dirty trap I had set for him.” Thank you for the compliment!

I play chess because I enjoy it, and the thing that I enjoy is the mental battle for supremacy. Such success can be achieved through deep strategic play (my favourite), a brilliant attack (my competence) or through a last-moment trick in an otherwise hopeless position (more common than even I would like to admit).

Personally I do not like increments in the time control; I think it is people’s right to get into time trouble and blunder their pieces – and it is my joy to exploit it!

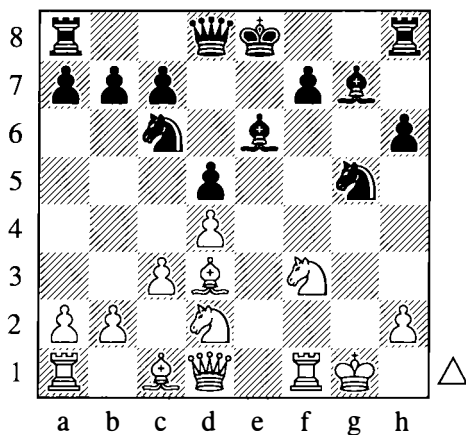
In this chapter we shall train the ability to set traps. Obviously there is a psychological element to it from the game scenario that we cannot simulate here – and in a greater sense than with the other techniques in this book. But still there are some guiding principles that we can use to develop our ability to set effective traps.

First of all, we should ensure that they are not overly naïve. The bait should not be too obvious. Secondly, it is good to mask them as a “normal” move. In the following game I fell for one of those:

Jasmin Bejtovic – Jacob Aagaard

Helsingør 2010

Although I did not find the official refutation of the dodgy variation of the King’s Gambit I tricked my opponent into playing (beginning with 1.e4 d6 2.f4 e5!), my position was still vastly superior at this point. But my carelessness was effectively exploited by my opponent.



13.♘b3?!

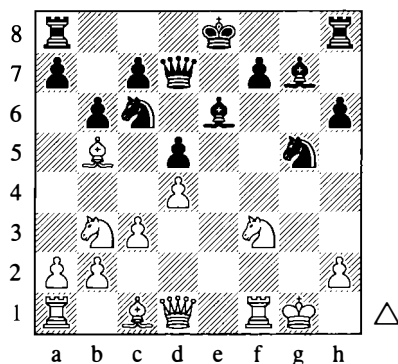
An innocent-looking move. In a poor superficial moment I decided not to allow the knight to come to c5.

13...b6?

13...♞d6! would have been better. White cannot play 14.♘c5?! because of 14...♘xd4! 15.cxd4 ♘xf3† 16.♞xf3 ♕xd4†, winning. Had I been fully awake this is probably what I would have played. Instead I continued pretty much as I would have done in a blitz game.

14.♕b5!

Suddenly I was in all sorts of problems. I was intending just 14...♞d7 with the idea of ...a6.



But suddenly I realised that after 15.♘a5! bxa5 16.♞a4 I would be in for a serious kicking. As a result I went from much better

to being on the run in just one move. Quite a successful moment for my opponent.

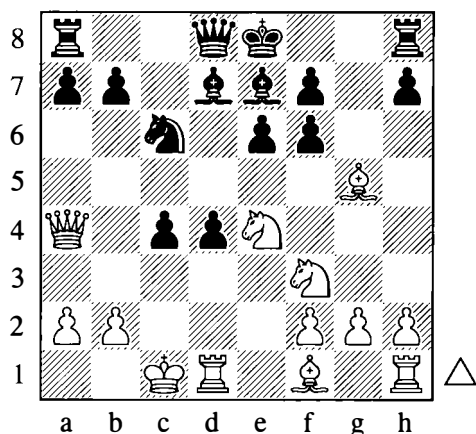
14...♖d6 15.♘e5↑

The tables have clearly turned. I had to defend a horrible position for most of the game, although I later got my chances and eventually drew just past move 40.

The best traps are in my opinion moves that also have other attributes, and at times it can be hard to distinguish between traps and pure prophylaxis. If our opponent is threatening something and we prevent it, and yet he goes for it anyway, because he does not understand the significance of our last move, does it count as a trap?

Boris Avrukh – Namig Guliyev

Turin (ol) 2006



White has won a piece, but his bishop does not have a good square. For example 12.♙h6 f5! 13.♘g3 ♘b4 and the white queen is lost. But Boris is quite resourceful and finds a prophylactic idea that includes a small trap:

12.♙h4!

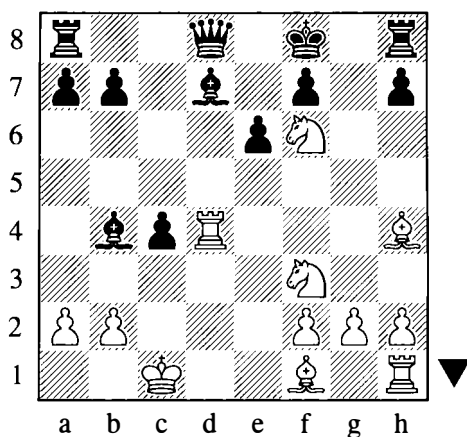
The best move, as well as a trap.

12...♘b4?

Black gets too greedy and tries to win the queen. Personally I would think this is rather naïve and if I had been in Black's position, against an opponent of Avrukh's calibre, I would have been more suspicious. (Or this is at least something I like to tell myself. To avoid being disillusioned, I will not check my games to see whether this is true or not!).

12...♙c8♞ was better.

13.♖xb4! ♙xb4 14.♘xf6† ♔f8 15.♙xd4±



White's attack is easy to underestimate; he has only two pieces for the queen. But it is already close to unstoppable.

15...♖a5?!

This gets blasted off the board.

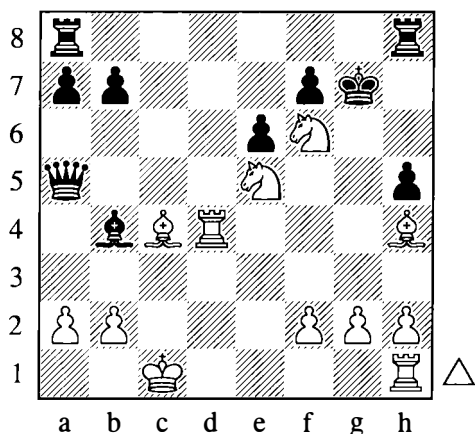
15...♙e7 16.♘d7† ♔e8 was maybe better. But after 17.♘f6† ♙xf6 18.♙xc4 ♙xd8 19.♙g3 White's technical advantage is quite significant.

16.♘d7† ♔e8 17.♘f6† ♔f8 18.♘e5!?

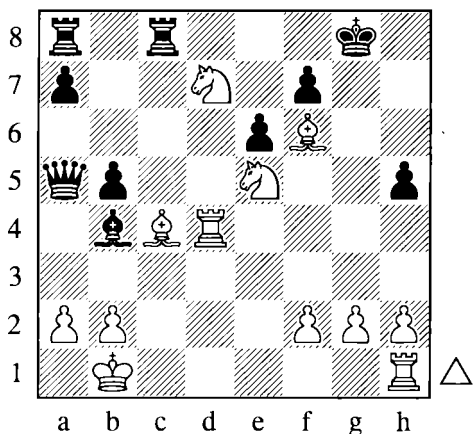
18.♙xc4 here and on the previous move was allegedly stronger. But as White has a winning attack anyway, we skate past this effortlessly.

18...h5 19.♙xc4 ♖g7?!

The best defensive try was 19...♙c3!, when White is close to winning, but after 20.♘ed7† ♙g7 21.♞d3 ♙xf6 22.♙xf6† ♖h6 23.♙c3! he will face a continuous technical challenge to prove this.

**20.♘fd7!**

Black is not going to make it.

20...♞hc8 21.♖b1 b5 22.♙f6† ♖g8

**23.♞h4! ♙e7 24.♙xe7 ♞xc4 25.♘f6† ♖g7
26.♞xh5
1-0**

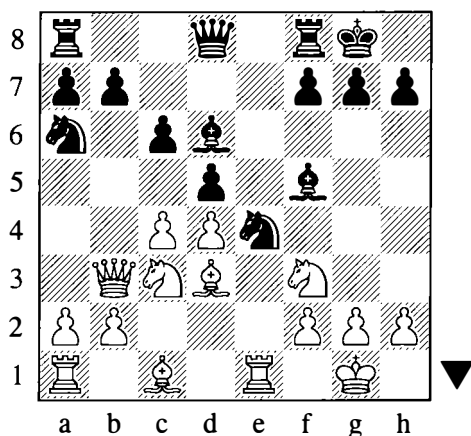
A trap is basically anything that can be used against your opponent. Sometimes the

objective evaluation of the position might not even change significantly for it to have a strong effect. Or in other words: you should never underestimate the element of surprise.

In the next example we shall see a scenario where White does not lose his advantage by falling for the trap, but the requirements on him increase – and probably at a moment when his confidence was seriously dented.

Vasily Emelin – Boris Avrukh

Alma-Ata 1991

**11...dxc4?!**

Playable, although not the best, but containing a devious idea. Again I would like to point out how a normal-looking move can contain venom that is not visible to the naked eye.

Black's objectively best play was perhaps 11...♘ac5 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♙xf5 ♘xb3 14.axb3, when it is not clear who has the advantage.

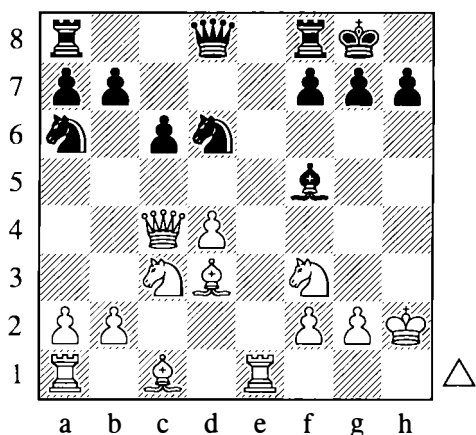
12.♞xc4?!

More ambitious was 12.♙xc4; and although Black has decent play after 12...♘xc3 13.bxc3 b5 14.♙f1 ♘c7 with reasonable control of the light squares, I have a tendency to like White.

12...♙xh2†!

Surprise!

13.♖xh2 ♜d6



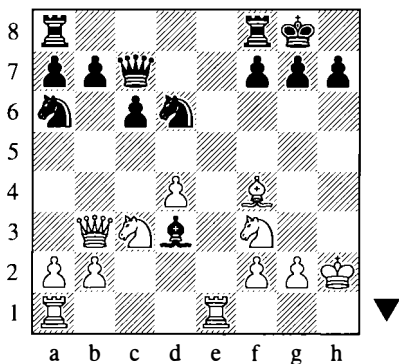
It is not hard to imagine the effect losing a pawn in this way would have had on White. You miss one thing like this and suddenly your confidence is in freefall.

14.♞b3 ♙xd3 15.♙g5 ♞c7

White had probably not fully recovered from the shock of losing a pawn and therefore did not spot that his position was still playable. But chess is of course a game and the practical decisions are what decide the outcome.

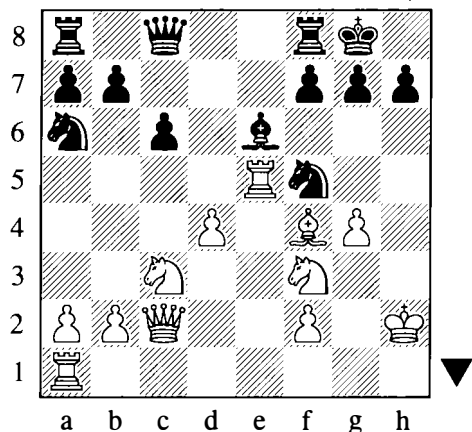
16.♞e7?!

16.♙f4! with the threat of ♜e5-c4 was strong.



Black should play 16...♞d8!, when the best White has is probably 17.♙g5 with a draw. But instead White simply ran out of steam and lost without further real struggle.

16...♞c8! 17.♙f4 ♙c4 18.♞c2 ♜f5 19.♞e5 ♙e6 20.g4?!



20...♜e7+ 21.♖g3 ♜b4 22.♞d2 ♜g6 23.♜e4 ♜d5 24.♙h6 ♙xg4 25.♜d6 ♞d7 26.♙xg7 ♖xg7 27.♞h1 h5 28.♞hxh5 ♞h8 0-1

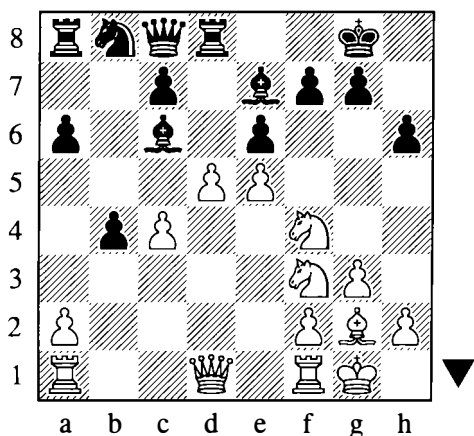
Finally I want to say just a few words about general resistance. There are times when you will be unquestionably on the run with your opponent shooting everything he's got at you, as if you were the bear running around the track in the shooting tent. At such times traps can be useful, but please do not despair and try for cheap tricks and traps just because they can come in handy at some point. Even when hope is slim, it is not gone.

In such a scenario it is generally a good idea to look for variations and positions where it is difficult for your opponent to find a win, rather than trying one-move traps. The general notion is that if it is hard for you to find the decisive blow, your opponent is more likely to struggle as well.

While fighting to find ways to prolong your agony, if not downright escape the pain, it is sensible to look for ways for the opponent to make mistakes as well and be prepared with a surprise or two.

Baskaran Adhiban – Maxim Turov

Wijk aan Zee 2012



Black is dead lost. However, he found a very nice way of making his opponent's job far more difficult.

The natural move was probably 18...♖e8, but White is winning in several ways. For example: 19.♘d4 c5 and now either 20.d6 or 20.♘dx6! fxe6 21.d6 ♖a7 22.♘xe6 and Black's position is clearly crumbling. So Black has to come up with something that makes White's job at least a little bit harder.

18...g5!?

18...exd5?! 19.cxd5 g5 is a poor version. Besides the computer solution of 20.e6!, White also has the human win 20.♙h3!?, when Black's position collapses: 20...g4 21.e6 gxh3 22.exf7+ ♖f8 23.♖c2 ♙xd5 24.♖h7 ♙xf7 25.♘e5 with a mating attack.

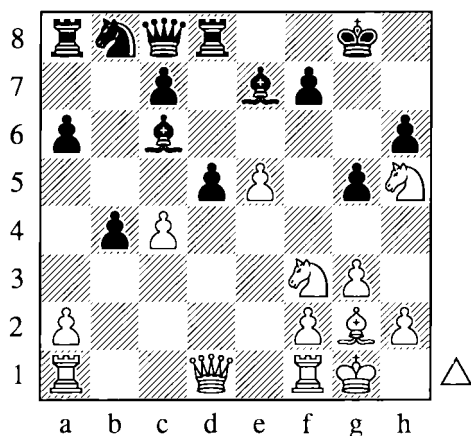
19.♘h5!?

White is relying on a pawn-break in the centre. Turov was hoping for this and had a surprising answer prepared.

White was winning after 19.♘d4! gxf4 20.♖g4+ ♖f8 (20...♙h8 21.♖xf4 ♙g5 22.♖xf7 and the black position is falling apart.) 21.♖h5 exd5 22.♖xh6+ followed by e5-e6 and ♙h3 with a decisive attack on the light squares.

Also strong was the less natural 19.♘xe6!? fxe6 20.♖c2 ♙e8 21.♘d4, when it is hard to believe that Black will survive, even though a direct win does not exist.

19...exd5!



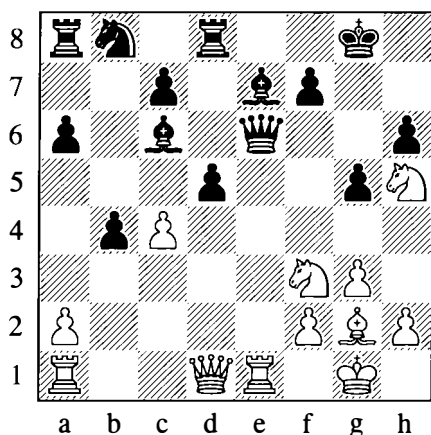
20.e6?

20.♘d4! is the strongest move, and the endgame after 20...dxc4 21.♙xc6 ♘xc6 22.♘xc6 ♖xd1 23.♘e7+ ♖f8 24.♘xc8 ♖xa1 25.♖xa1 ♖xc8 should not hold for Black in the long run. But in the long run we are all dead; the job of the soldier is to fight to live another day, not to concern himself with what may happen beyond then.

20...♖xe6! 21.♖e1

Apparently White was of the understanding that he was about to win here. But Turov had a surprise for him.

21.♞d4 is no longer strong. Black can play
21...♞g6 with a good position.



21...♞xc4!!

The surprise. White was expecting things such as 21...♞g6 22.♞e5 and 21...♞g4 22.♞xe7 ♞xh5 23.♞e1 ♞d7 24.♞d4 ♞b7 25.♞e6! in both cases with a winning attack.

Basically White has fallen into a well hidden trap after which the win is no longer obvious.

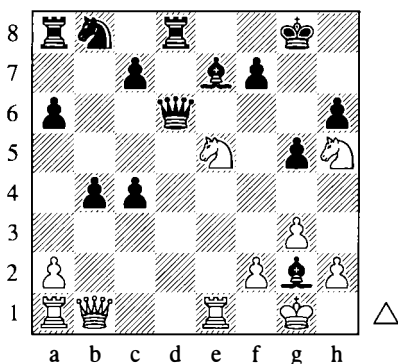
22.♞c1?

Stronger was:

22.♞b1!

White would retain an advantage after:

22...♞d6 23.♞e5 ♞xg2



24.♞xf7!

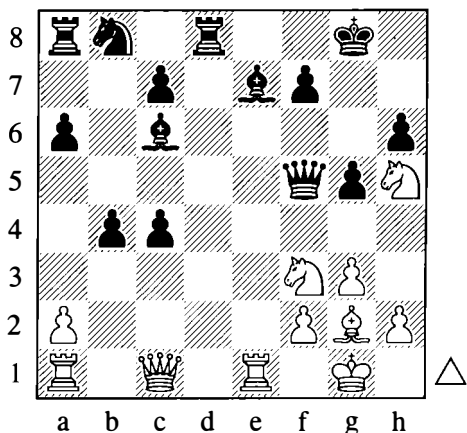
The difficult move to spot perhaps?

24...♞d3! 25.♞xd8 ♞xb1 26.♞axb1 ♞xd8

27.♞xg2 ♞c6±

White has winning chances here, but his task has been made increasingly difficult. In the game he was already worse.

22...♞f5!



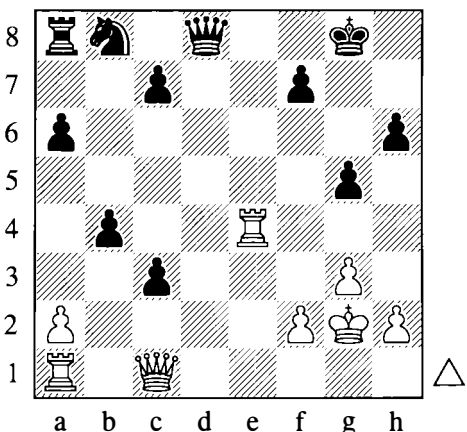
23.♞e5

23.♞xe7 ♞xf3 24.♞xc4 ♞xg2 25.♞xg2 c5+

23...♞g6?

23...♞d7!± was stronger. The advantage is now returned to White, but after having blown it once he is already quite insecure in his play and clearly struggling with his time consumption. All in all I am tempted to say that Black won convincingly.

24.♞xe7 ♞xh5 25.♞e5 ♞xg2 26.♞xg2 ♞e2
27.♞c6 ♞d3 28.♞xd8 ♞xd8 29.♞e4 c3



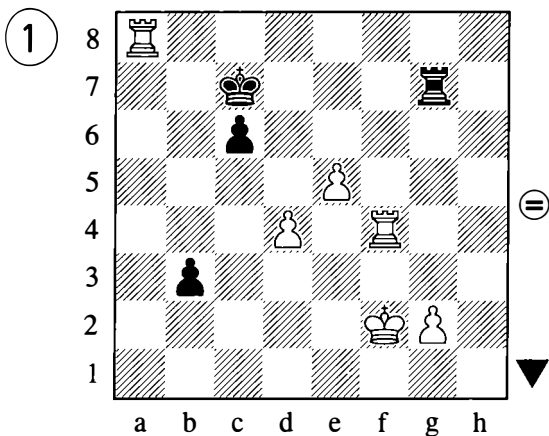
30. ♖d1?

30. ♖xb4 ♜d5† 31. f3 ♜c6 32. ♖e4±

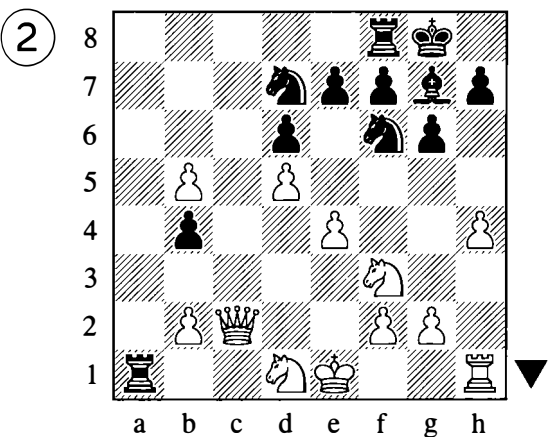
30... ♜c6 31. ♖c4 ♜e5 32. ♖xd8† ♖xd8
 33. ♖c5 f6 34. a3 a5 35. axb4 axb4 36. ♖xc7
 ♖d7 37. ♖aa7 ♖xc7 38. ♖xc7 g4 39. h3 ♜d3
 40. ♜f1 g4 41. ♜g1 ♜e1 42. ♜h2 c2
 43. ♜xh3 b3
 0-1

The ability to find ways for the opponent to go wrong is as important as any other way to win in chess. I hope working through the exercises here will help you in improving this ability. If not, then count yourself lucky that there will not be any traps reappearing in the tests later in the book!

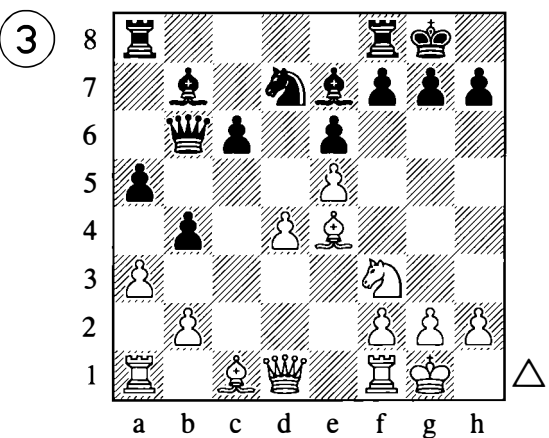
McShane – Mamedyarov, Lausanne 2003



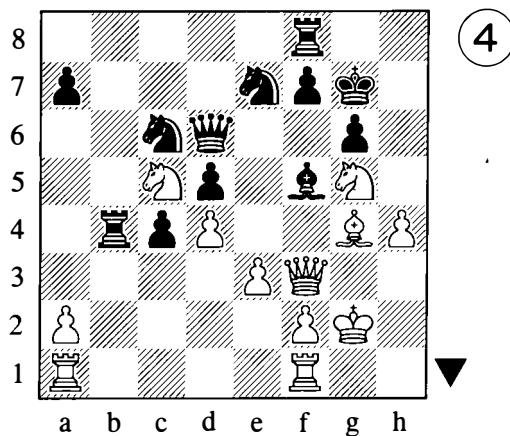
Raetsky – Avrukh, Biel 1996



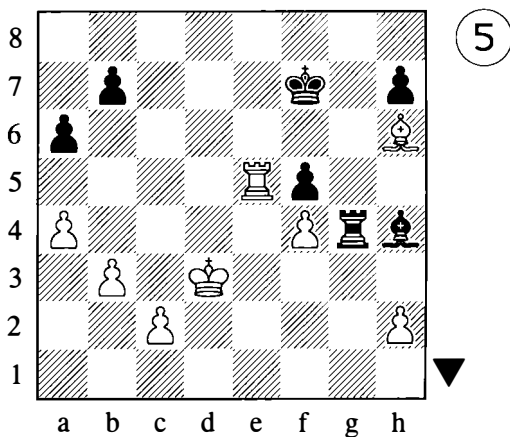
Avrukh – Ramesh, Ubeda 2001



Rewitz – Aagaard, Denmark 2011



Tiviakov – Aagaard, Bratto 2007



1. McShane – Mamedyarov, Lausanne 2003

Black does not have any choice, so the exercise is a bit weird. But the point is to see the trap White can fall into. **43...b2!** There is nothing else, of course. **44.♖ff8?** White appears to stop the pawn from promoting, but it is an illusion. White would have won easily with **44.♖a7† ♕b6** **45.♖xg7 b1=♚** **46.g4**, although some time would have to be invested. **44...b1=♚??** Black falls for the illusion too. **44...♕b6!** would have been a cold shower. After **45.♖ab8† ♖b7** **46.♖xb7† ♕xb7** **47.♖f7† ♕a6!** White has to find **48.♖f6 b1=♚** **49.♖xc6† ♕b5** **50.♖f6!** in order to secure the draw. The rook will make it to f3 and we have a fortress. **45.♖a7† ♚b7** **46.♖xb7† ♕xb7** **1–0**

2. Raetsky – Avrukh, Biel 1996

17...♕c5!? Fishing. **18.♖d2?** White falls for the trick. After **18.e5 b3** **19.♚d2 ♖fe4** **20.♚e3**, Black would have a hard defence in front of him. **18...♖c1!** Oops! The queen is trapped. **0–1**

3. Avrukh – Ramesh, Ubeda 2001

16.♖g5! A good move with quite a common trap behind it. **16...♖xg5?** Black underestimates the danger he is facing. Correct was either **16...♚d8** or **16...♖d8!** **17.axb4 axb4±**. **17.♖xh7†!** Black certainly saw this, but it looks as if White has little to follow up with. This is true, but on this occasion little is quite enough. **17...♕xh7** **18.♖xg5† ♕g6** **18...♕h6** does not fare better. **19.♚g4!** with the threat of **♚h4†**, **♚h7†**, **f4†** and **♚h3#** is quite a significant event. Black is dead lost. **19.♚g4 f5** **20.♚g3!** The dangers have not receded for the black king. **20...♚xd4?!** **20...c5** was objectively best. White can of course take on e6, but even stronger is **21.dxc5!** **♚c6** (**21...♕xc5** **22.♕xe6† ♕f7** **23.♚xg7†!** and White wins) **22.♕xe6† ♕f7** **23.♕d4 ♚xc5** **24.♕xf5 ♚xe5** **25.♕d6†** and White reaches a winning endgame. **21.♕e4† ♕f7** White also wins after **21...♕h7** **22.♚h4† ♕g6** **23.♚g5†**, because of **23...♕f7** **24.♖ad1** or **23...♕h7** **24.♚h5† ♕g8** **25.♕g5**. **22.♖ad1!** Black resigned. **22...♚xe4** **23.♖xd7† ♕e8** **24.♚xg7** leads to mate. **1–0**

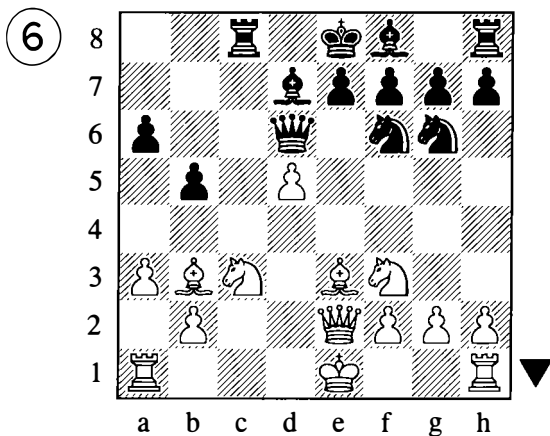
4. Rewitz – Aagaard, Denmark 2011

Black has a big positional advantage, but still has to prove it. I took a short cut. **24...c3!?** **25.♖ac1?** White did not see the trap set by the last move. **25...♖xg4** **26.♚xg4 ♚xc5!** Oops! **27.a3 ♖c4** **28.♚f4 ♕xd4!?** A practical solution. There was no real counterplay after **28...♚xa3** **29.h5 gxh5**, but having read a few too many Stephen King novels, I was seeing ghosts! **29.exd4 ♚xd4** **30.♚xd4† ♖xd4** **31.♖xc3 ♖xh4** **32.f4 ♕f5** **33.♖c7 ♕e3†** **34.♕g3 ♖g4†** **35.♕f3 ♖xg5** **36.♕xe3 ♖g3†** **37.♕d4 ♖xa3** **38.f5 ♖a4†** **39.♕xd5 ♖a5†** **40.♕e4 ♖e8†** **41.♕d4 ♖d8†** **42.♕e4 ♖e8†** **43.♕d4 ♖xf5** **44.♖xf5 gxh5** **45.♖xa7 ♕g6** **46.♕d3 f4** **47.♖a4 ♕g5** **48.♖a7 f6** **0–1**

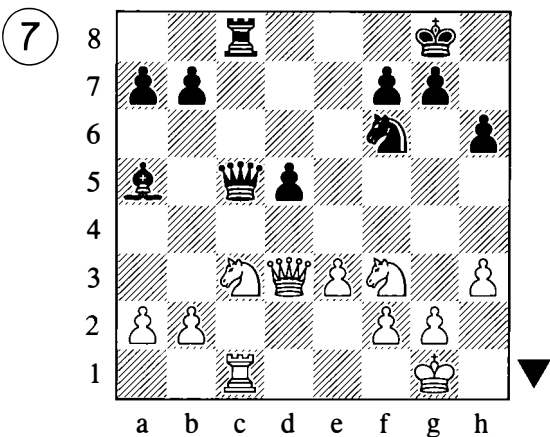
5. Tiviakov – Aagaard, Bratto 2007

I would have been okay after the normal **32...♖g2**, but found a nice little trap. **32...♖f6!** **33.♖xf5?** I was a bit shocked that he fell for it, which explains why I did not make more out of the situation later on. **33...♕g6** **34.♕e4 ♖g1!** He had missed this move. **35.♖xf6† ♕xf6** **36.♖g5† ♕g6** **37.h4 ♖e1†** **38.♕d4** This ending is winning, but I decided to “secure the draw” with **38...h6?**, offering at the same time. I would say I was not emotionally prepared for the turn of luck in a game against a player I respect immensely and where I had been a pawn down earlier on. $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$

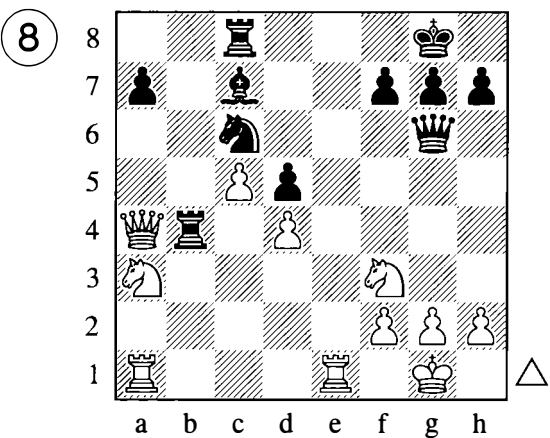
Dittmar – Aagaard, Arco 2006



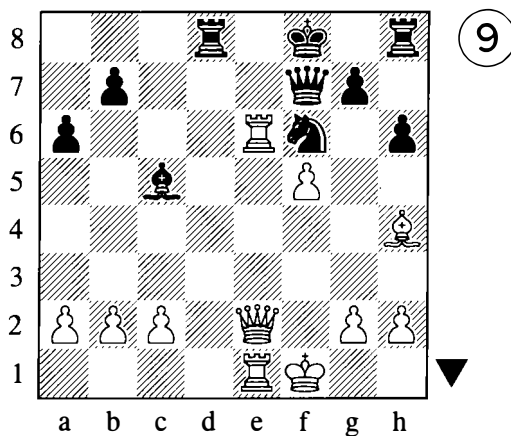
May – Aagaard, Isle of Man 2003



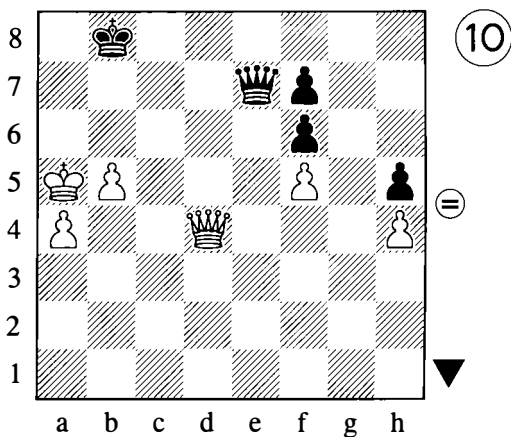
El Kher – Aagaard, Nyborg 2001



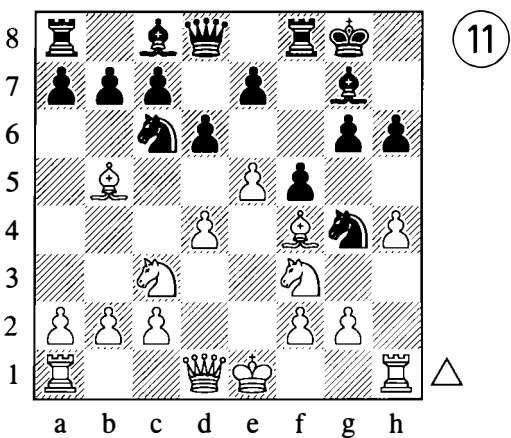
Volodarsky – Batrakov, Correspondence 2009



Chigorin – Schlechter, Ostend 1905



Schandorff – Kristiansen, Denmark 2012



6. Dittmar – Aagaard, Arco 2006

I emerged from the opening as I wanted, with a tricky position. Unfortunately it was most tricky for me! However I found a simple trap here. **15...♙g4!?** The trap is mainly psychological. I hoped my opponent was uncomfortable with the pin and would therefore try to break it immediately. **16.h3?** Falling for it. White should not be afraid of double pawns, but instead play 16.0–0 ♖h4 17.♖ac1 with the better game. **16...♙xf3 17.♗xf3?** Continuing down the same road. **17...♖h4!?** Oops! **18.♗g3 ♗xg3 19.fxg3 ♖xg2† 20.♙f2 ♖xe3 21.♙xe3** Black won on move 55.

7. May – Aagaard, Isle of Man 2003

22...♖e4!? As well as setting a trap this is also a good move, but obviously there were a number of decent ones. The main point was demonstrated in the game. **23.♖e2?** Falling for it. **23.♖d2** with a just about equal position was better. **23...♗xc1†! 24.♖xc1 ♖xc1†** White resigned. **25.♙h2 ♖h1†! 0–1**

8. El Kher – Aagaard, Nyborg 2001

I lost a few times to Henrik during the time I coached him. Only afterwards did I manage to get him! I guess I had conflicted emotions about playing him. Anyway, here he outfoxes me again. **26.♗a6! 26.♗d1** was only level. **26...♖cb8?** Correct was **26...♖d8!** **27.♖b5 ♙b8±** and Black is sort of okay. **27.♖b5!** A nice trick, but not the only good option. **27.♖c2!?** ♖b2 **28.♖e3** would also have been strong. The d5-pawn cannot be defended by the queen on account of **29.♖c4!**. **27...♙f4 28.♖xa7 ♖xa7 29.♗xa7 h5 30.♗d7 ♖b1 31.♖axb1 ♖xb1 32.♗e8† ♙h7 33.g3 ♖xe1† 34.♗xe1 ♙c7 35.♙g2 ♙d8 36.♗e8 ♙f6 37.c6 ♗c2 38.♗d7 1–0**

9. Volodarsky – Batrakov, Correspondence 2009

24...g5!? A very simple trap, which was entirely wasted on an e-mail game. After **25.♙f2** the game was unclear, though Black eventually won. The trap was of course **25.fxg6? ♖g4†!** transposing into a winning endgame on account of **26.gxf7?! ♖xh2#**.

10. Chigorin – Schlechter, Ostend 1905

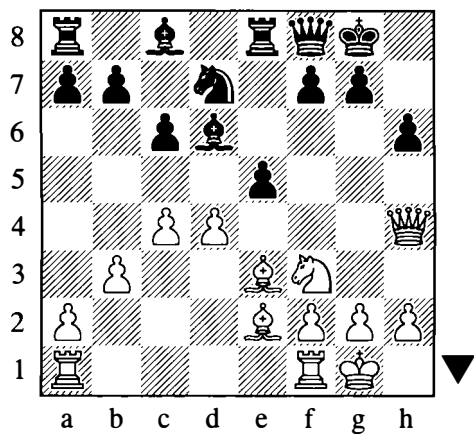
White is completely winning of course, but Black tried a last trap. **44...♗c7†!?** **45.♗b6†?** White falls for it, hoping for immediate simplicity through the exchange of queens. **45.b6** won easily, of course. **45...♙a8!** White must have been absolutely stunned the moment he realized what he had done. Taking the queen is stalemate and **46.♙a6 ♗c8† 47.♙a5** is a perpetual. So the players agreed a draw. **½–½**

11. Schandorff – Kristiansen, Denmark 2012

10.♗e2! White is preparing 0–0–0 at the same time as just defending the e5-pawn. Black had prepared an idea, but was not aware that it was unsound. **10...♖xd4?** Black falls for it. **10...dxe5 11.dxe5 e6 12.♖d1 ♗e7** would not be far from equality. **11.♖xd4 dxe5** Apparently Black will regain his piece with interest? **12.♖f3!** No! The queen would be trapped after **12...exf4 13.♖d1**, so Black played: **12...♗d6 13.♖d1 ♗b4 14.♗c4†** and lost without a fight. **1–0**

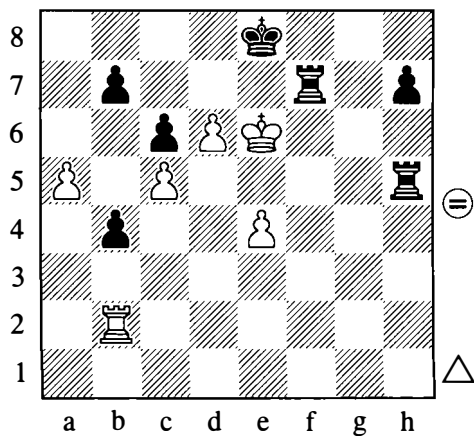
J. Grant – Aagaard, Oban 2005

12



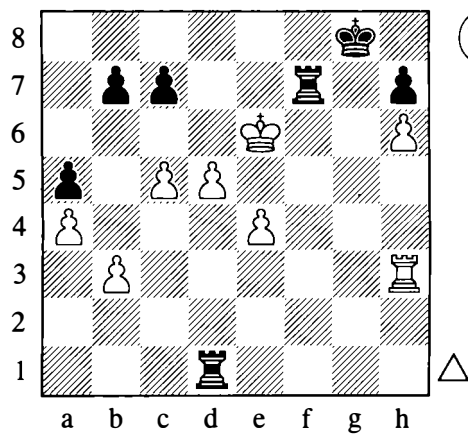
McShane – Kramnik, London 2011

13



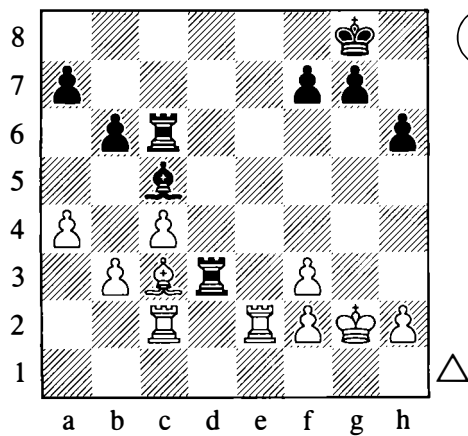
McShane – Kramnik, London 2011

14



Su.B. Hansen – Aagaard, Hillerod 2010

15



12. J. Grant – Aagaard, Oban 2005

15...exd4!? I knew that 15...e4 16.♟d2 g5 17.♞h3 ♜f6 18.g4♞ would be quite comfortable for me. But then I found a nice little trick. **16.♜xd4?** 16.♞xd4 was necessary: 16...♙c5♞ **16...♜f6!→** Suddenly I am threatening not only ...g5, but also ...♙e4!. Black won on move 38.

13. McShane – Kramnik, London 2011

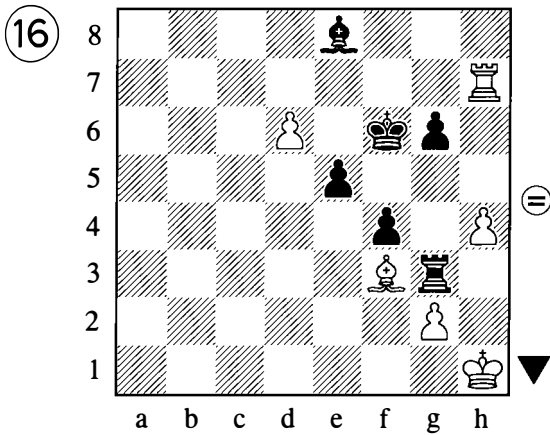
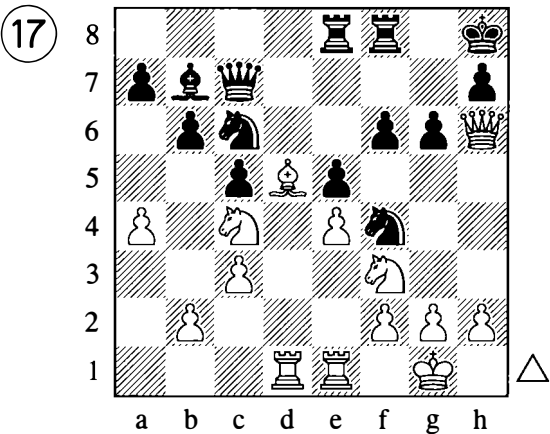
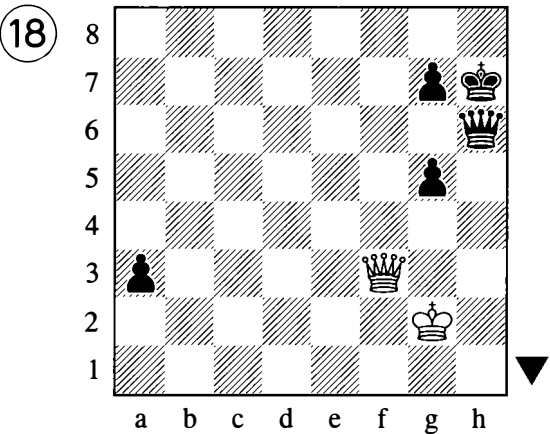
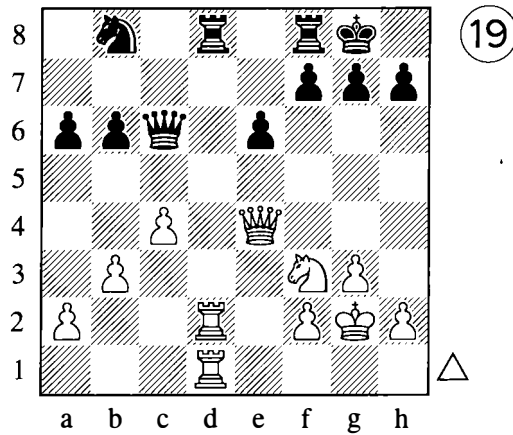
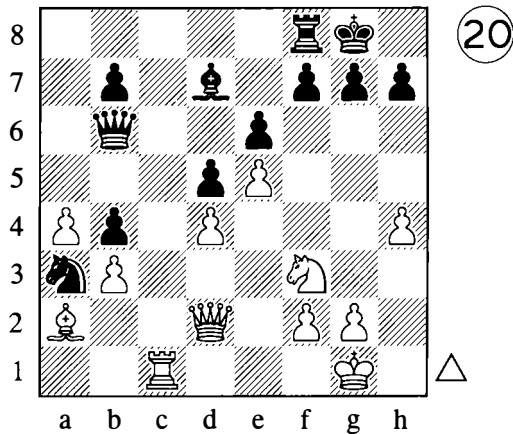
In this lost endgame, McShane kept finding tricks. This was the last one: **59.a6!?** ♞h6♠! Kramnik is alert. It was tempting to decide to mate his opponent with 59...♞g7?, but then White saves the game with: 60.♞g2!! (60.d7♠? on the other hand does not work: 60...♞xd7 61.a7 ♞d8 62.♞xb4 ♞xc5 63.♞xb7 ♞h5 64.e5 ♞h6♠ 65.♜f5 ♞h1 and Black wins.) 60...♞h6♠ 61.♜e5 ♞e7♠ 62.dxe7 bxa6 63.♞a2 and Black's advantage is not enough to claim the full point. As well as the game move order, 59...bxa6 60.♞xb4 ♞h6♠ also works of course. **60.♜e5 bxa6 61.♞xb4 ♞a7 62.♞b8♠ ♜f7 63.♞c8 ♞e6♠ 64.♜f5 a5 65.♞h8 ♞f6♠ 66.♜e5 ♜g7 67.♞c8 a4 68.♞xc6 a3 69.d7 a2 0–1**

14. McShane – Kramnik, London 2011

McShane here went for a trick with: **48.d6! c6** Simple and calm. You can feel the frustrations Kramnik suffered during the game from not being able to eliminate all counterplay quickly. Here a reasonable alternative was 48...♞g1!?, while it was less natural to play 48...cxd6?! 49.cxd6 ♞g1 50.e5, when the pawns offer some counterplay. Black should still win with accurate play, but already this is a disappointment when you are a rook up! The main tricks were of course that the natural move of bringing in the king with 48...♜f8? would lose to 49.♞f3!! ♞xf3 50.dxc7. There is a similar story after 48...b6? 49.♞g3♠! ♜f8, when White is winning with both 50.♞f3! and 50.♞g7!?. **49.♜e5 ♜f8 50.♞h2 ♞g1 51.b4 axb4 52.♞b2 ♞g5♠ 53.♜e6 ♞g6♠ 54.♜e5 ♞xh6** We have reached the previous exercise.

15. Su.B. Hansen – Aagaard, Hillerod 2010

It is not clear if White should give the check on e8 first, which the computer says is strongest, or just play as he did. But in terms of setting a trap, the text move was certainly very clever. **25.b4! ♞g6♠!?** I fell straight for it, of course. After 25...♙d6 White can give the check or play 26.♞ed2, in both cases with some advantage. **26.♜f1 ♙d6?** Already I should have been cautious with 26...♞d1♠ 27.♞e1 ♞xe1♠ 28.♙xe1 ♙f8, although I fear for my health after 29.♞d2. But maybe it is not so bad. In the game I had to accept the poor consequences after: **27.♞e8♠ ♜h7 28.♜e2!±** My rook is trapped. I played the only thing I could, but knew that my position was lost. **28...♞xc3 29.♞xc3 ♙xb4 30.♞d3 ♞g2 31.♜f1 ♞xh2 32.♜g1 32.♞d7!?** **32...♞h5** 32...♞h4 was better, but the ending is a drag. **33.♞d5! f5 34.♞c8 a5 35.♞c6?** Missing the chance to win the game. I saw the idea during play, but had no alternatives. The more active 35.♞c7! was strong. My intention was 35...♙c5, but after 36.f4 I have problems with the g7-pawn. For example: 36...♞h4 37.♞xf5 ♞g4♠ 38.♜f1 ♜g6 39.♞ff7 ♙d4 40.♜e2 and the position feels increasingly shaky. **35...♙c5 36.f4 ♞h3!** Black now has enough counterplay. **37.♞xc5 bxc5 38.♞xc5 ♞c3 ½–½**

Carlsen – McShane, London 2009**K. Mueller – McShane, Lippstadt 2000****Agdestein – Aagaard, Dresden (ol) 2008****Greet – Hammer, Gausdal 2007****D. Howell – Hillarp Persson, Oslo 2008**

16. Carlsen – McShane, London 2009

56...♟f5! Not the best move, but as nothing works, you might as well try a trick. Black cannot save the game at all. For example: 56...g5 57.hxg5† ♜xg5 58.d7 ♙xd7 59.♞xd7 ♟f5 60.♞f7† ♟e6 61.♞f8+– and Black will never achieve the drawing idea of ...e5-e4. Even worse is 56...♟e6? 57.♞e7† and White just wins. The game went 56...e4 57.♙xe4 ♞e3, but it was no challenge for Carlsen to find 58.♙d5! (threatening 59.d7!). After 58...♟f5 59.♟h2!? ♞e5 60.♙f3 ♟f6 61.d7 Black resigned. **57.d7?** This move falls for the trick. 57.♞f7†! is the way to win: 57...♙xf7 58.d7 e4 59.♙e2 and Black cannot do anything. For example: 59...♞e3 60.d8=♞ ♞xe2 61.♞g5† ♟e6 62.♞g4† and wins. **57...♙xd7 58.♞xd7 e4! 59.♞d5† 59.♙d1 f3 60.gxf3 ♞h3† 61.♟g2 ♞xh4 62.♙c2 ♟e6!** and Black escapes to a bishop and rook vs. rook ending, which is holdable. **59...♟e6 60.♙xe4 ♞e3!** The bishop is trapped. White has nothing better than: **61.♞g5 ♞xe4 62.♞xg6† ♟f5** Black should hold.

17. K. Mueller – McShane, Lippstadt 2000

White would be better after 19.g3, 19.b3 or 19.♞d2. Instead he went for a little trick. **19.♟h4!? ♟e7?** If McShane had spotted the trick, he would have played the strong 19...♟d8!, with the threat of ...♟f7! trapping the queen. Here White only keeps the balance with 20.♟d6! ♞xd6 21.♙xb7 ♞c7 22.♙d5 ♟f7 23.♙xf7=. **20.♙xb7 ♟g8?!** This is rather naive play. What did Black think White intended? To lose the queen? Technically better was 20...♞xb7 21.♟d6, but this was of course not McShane's intention. **21.♟xg6† ♟xg6** Probably McShane thought he was winning with his double threat? This only illustrates my point that we should always look half a move deeper than we intuitively tend to. **22.♞h3!** This must have come as a surprise. The bishop is immune because of ♞d7, so White has won a pawn. **22...f5 23.exf5 ♟f4 24.♞f3 ♟f6 25.♞d6 ♞g8 26.♞xf6 e4 27.♞xe4 ♞d8 28.♟e3 ♟xg2 29.♟xg2 ♞xb7 30.♞fe6 1–0**

18. Agdestein – Aagaard, Dresden (ol) 2008

I had messed this winning queen ending up completely. But in the end I found a cheap trap. **74...g4!? 75.♞xa3 ♞c6† 76.♟g3?** White draws easily with 76.♟g1. Black can play ...♞f3 and ...g3, only to be met with ♞xg7†! and a claim of a draw... **76...♞f3† 77.♞xf3 gxf3 78.♟xf3 ♟h6!** He had clearly missed this move. Black just wins. **79.♟g4 ♟g6 0–1**

19. Greet – Hammer, Gausdal 2007

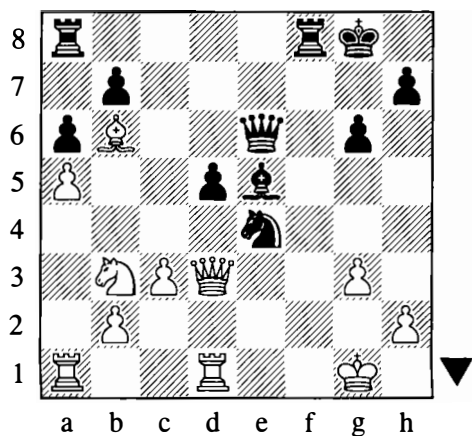
Asking around the office for traps, Andrew came up with this sweet one. The move played was also strong, but maybe 25.♞f4, with a clear edge, was at least as good. **25.♟g5! ♞xd2 26.♞xd2 h6?** Falling for the trap. Black of course has a hard life after 26...♞xe4† 27.♟xe4 ♞c8±, but the ending is by no means lost by force. **27.♞d6!** A nice trick shot. **27...♞xe4† 28.♟xe4** The b-pawn drops, and White won the ending on move 59.

20. D. Howell – Hillarp Persson, Oslo 2008

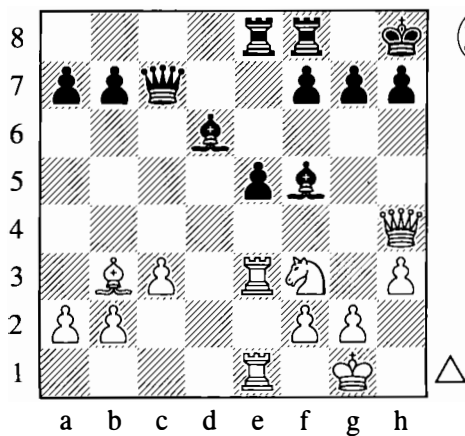
26.♞c5!± ♙xa4? Falling for the trap, though Black was worse anyway. **27.bxa4 b3 28.a5! bxa2 29.axb6 a1=♞† 30.♞c1** Black resigned. He will end up a piece down. **1–0**

Dolmatov – Razuvaev, Rostov-on-Don 1993

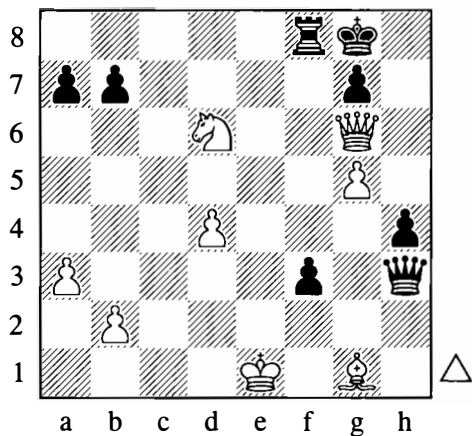
(21)

**Hanley – Shaw**, Hinckley Island 2009**Janev – Solak**, Cappelle la Grande 2012

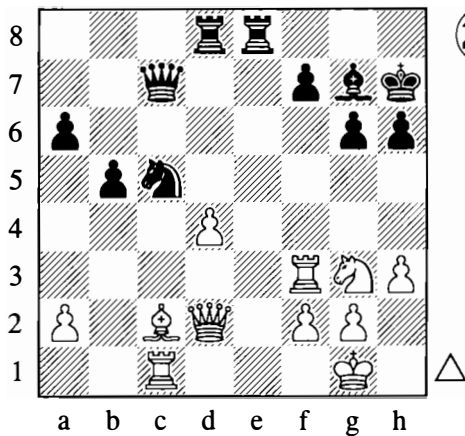
(23)

**Zherebukh – Stukopin**, Moscow 2012

(22)



(24)



21. Dolmatov – Razuvaev, Rostov-on-Don 1993

This position was given on ChessBase.com with the obituary of Razuvaev. He was a fine writer and it was sad to see him die in his sixties. In this position he set a nice trap for his opponent. **33...♟g5!** Defending the d-pawn with 33...♟f6± leaves White with the more pleasant position. **34.♟xd5?** White should first play 34.♟c5!?, intending to take the d-pawn next move. Black then has a spectacular way to force a draw, but nothing more: 34...♟d4! 35.cxd4 ♟h3† 36.♟g2? (36.♟h1 ♟f2† 37.♟h1 ♟h3†=) 36...♟f2† 37.♟h1 ♟g4 38.♟f1 ♟f4!–+ 39.♟e3 ♟xh2† 40.♟xh2 ♟h3† 41.♟g1 ♟g2# **34...♟d4!!!** Certainly this must have come as a stunning blow for White. **35.♟xd4 ♟f3† 36.♟g2 ♟xd4 37.♟xe6† 37.♟xd4 ♟xb3** is even worse. **37...♟xe6†** Black won on move 78.

22. Hanley – Shaw, Hinckley Island 2009

This was kindly provided by John Shaw, who assures me that he would have fallen for the trap, had his opponent set it. Knowing him well I believe this completely, especially as he had very little time to play the last two moves before the time control. The game ended: 39.d5? Making it easy. 39...f2† 40.♟xf2 ♟h1† White resigned. Black has 41...♟f3†. **39.♟f2!** This would have been a beautiful trap. Now 39...♟d7 is calm and winning. But instead John would certainly have played: **39...♟h1? 40.♟d2 ♟f1?** A plausible sequence in time trouble. 40...♟h3!± is better, but not likely. **41.♟e6† ♟h8 42.g6!!** A fantastic conclusion. Black can now give a check on e2 and be entirely lost in the ending, or play **42...♟xf2† 43.♟c3!** when bizarrely there is no way to avoid mate.

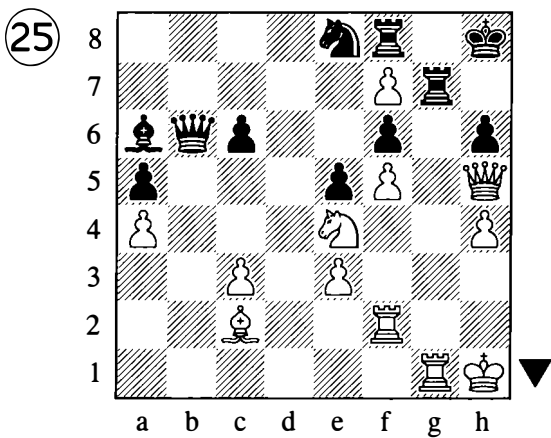
23. Janev – Solak, Cappelle la Grande 2012

21.♟g5!? ♟g6? This looks like a trap, but actually Black has fallen into a trap of White's making. 21...♟e6 was better, when it is a debate if White has any advantage at all. I would guess not. **22.♟xe5!** This pawn was supposed to be protected by a tactic. **22...♟xe5** This is what Black was relying on, as 22...♟xe5 23.♟xe5 f6 24.♟xe8 is just a pawn down. **23.♟xe5 f6** It looks as if Black is winning a piece, but actually he is just losing a pawn. **24.♟xg6!!** At this point Black might have realized how things were going, but it was too late. **24...fxe5 24...hxg6?** does not work. After 25.♟e4! Black will be mated: 25...g5 (or 25...♟f7 26.♟e8† ♟f8 27.♟xf8† ♟xf8 28.♟h4#) 26.♟h4† gxh4 27.♟h5# **25.♟h5 g6 26.♟h4 ♟f4 27.♟g5±** White won on move 83.

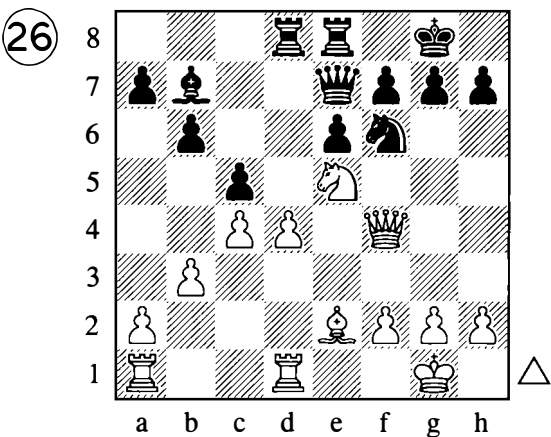
24. Zhrebukh – Stukopin, Moscow 2012

White can keep equality easily with 25.♟f4, but White could also play for a win with a little trap. **25.♟f5!** In the game White played weakly with 25.♟e2? ♟e7† and lost on move 51. **25...gxf5?** This move falls into a rather elaborate trap, whereas after the simple 25...♟a7! 26.♟xg7 ♟xg7 the position would be roughly equal. **26.♟xf5!!** This is the point Black could easily overlook. The trap was to make Black think that White was intending to play 26.♟xf5†! ♟g8, when the knight on c5 would in fact not be hanging. White would be able to save the game only with the brilliant 27.♟d3!, leading to equality after 27...♟d5 28.♟xc5 ♟xc5 29.dxc5 ♟xc5. **26...♟g8 26...♟h8** also does not work out for Black. After 27.♟xc5 ♟xc5 White has 28.♟d3! f5 29.dxc5 ♟xd3 30.♟xd3 with serious winning chances. **27.♟xc5 ♟d6 27...♟xc5 28.♟h7†** and wins. **28.♟b3!** 28.d5 h5 29.♟g5 ♟f8!∞ is nothing special. 28.♟c7!? ♟xd4 29.♟xd4 ♟xd4 30.♟b3 ♟f8 31.♟7c6± also puts Black under pressure. **28...♟xd4 29.♟c2!±** White has a strong attack on the light squares. For example: **29...♟d3 30.♟f5 ♟f8 31.♟xd3 ♟xd3 32.♟c6** and Black will lose material and struggle with his structure afterwards.

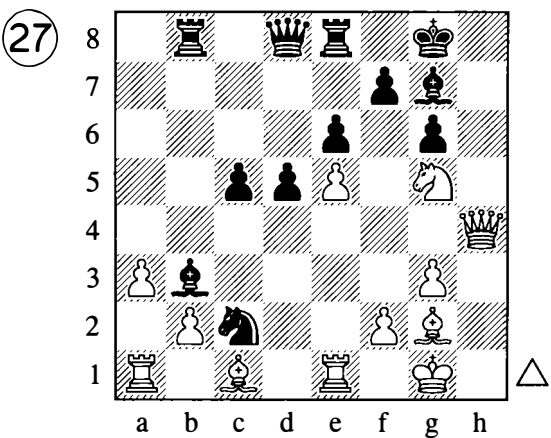
Su.B. Hansen – Aronian, Porto Carras 2011



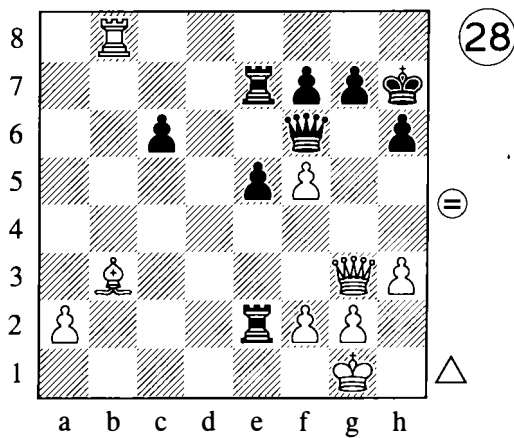
Aagaard – Bui Vinh, Budapest 2002



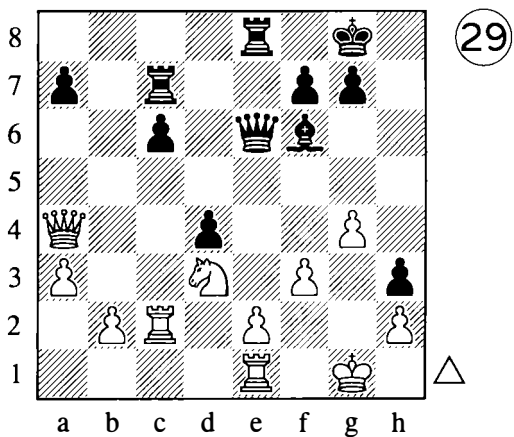
McNab – Jacobs, Manchester 1982



Tukmakov – Karpov, Leningrad 1973



Arkell – Holland, Wycombe 2012



25. Su.B. Hansen – Aronian, Porto Carras 2011

The Danish Grandmaster was shaking with nerves, having outplayed his famous opponent completely. However, the World No. 2 tried one last trick. **37...♟xe3!?** 37...♟fxf7 was objectively best, but White is winning after **38.♟g6 ♟xe3 39.♟g5!** as well as after a whole lot of other ideas. **38.fxe8=♟??** Hansen falls for the trick. He was slowly reaching out for the pawn and I as team captain standing right behind him could not do anything to stop him. At least, not without tarnishing my name and the reputation of Danish chess for a generation. Okay, I regret not coughing, but I didn't... **38.♟g6 ♟h3† 39.♟g1 ♟fxf7 40.♟b3** is a nice win. Aronian (with no sign of understanding the emotional events taking place in his opponent) asked immediately after the game: "Why did you not play **38.♟xg7 ♟xg7 39.♟g6!** and you are winning." The answer must be that he did not see anything wrong with what he did! The Chairman of the Danish federation was the arbiter of the adjacent match and later on said he did not manage to see everything that happened in the game, "But Sune, could you not have played **38.♟g5!+?**" **38...♟h3† 39.♟h2 ♟xg1†** Now Sune saw the problem and resigned with a pained expression on his face. **40.♟xg1 ♟f1# 0-1**

26. Aagaard – Bui Vinh, Budapest 2002

I had missed some of the games in this event due to illness. I showed up to this game because my opponent had the chance to expand his already achieved GM-norm. I wanted to ruin this in person, not by telephone... **18.dxc5!?** ♟xc5? **18...bxc5=** was the correct move. **19.♟h5! ♟xd1† 19...♟xh5 20.♟xf7† ♟h8 21.♟xh5+–** is simple. **20.♟xd1 ♟f8** At this point my snout-infested head was unable to think more than two moves ahead and I immediately abandoned the possible combination: **21.♟xf7!?** Instead I played **21.♟f3?±**, offered a draw and crawled back to my sick bed. **21...♟xf7 22.♟xf7 ♟c6** As I mentioned, I just stopped here, unable to think. **23.♟h6†!** Going for a solid positional edge. **23...gxf6 24.f3 ♟f7 25.♟b8! 25.♟xh6!± 25...b5 26.♟xa7 bxc4 27.bxc4 ♟g6 28.c5±** White's advantage is bordering on being decisive.

27. McNab – Jacobs, Manchester 1982

My former teammate Dr McNab is in action against the future chief editor of Everyman Chess (and also good friend of mine). His attack has led nowhere, but as anyone who has ever lost to him will know, he is very tricky indeed. **26.♟e3!** Setting quite a serious trap. Colin saw that **26.♟h7† ♟f8 27.♟h4** would suggest a draw, on account of **27...♟xe1? 28.♟h7† ♟g8 29.♟g5!±**. He cannot remember if he considered the computer's suggestion of **27...♟e7!?**, which leads to unclear play. I am honestly a bit disappointed with his poor recall. **26...d4?** Falling into the trap by weakening the e4-square. Something like **26...♟b5** would have kept control. White can of course still draw with **27.♟h7† ♟f8 28.♟h4!**. This time Black cannot avoid the drawing **28...♟g8!** without ending in trouble. After **28...♟e7?** the stars are not the same and Black is lost after **29.♟h7† ♟e8 30.♟f6!! 27.♟h7† ♟f8 28.♟xf7!** Now there is no talk of a draw. **28...♟xf7** There are alternatives, but no pleasant ones. **28...♟d7** is the computer's suggestion. White wins after **29.♟d6 dxe3 30.fxe3 ♟xe1 31.♟xe1 ♟c2 32.e4 ♟d3 33.♟e3 ♟e7 34.♟f3† ♟f7 35.♟xf7 ♟xe4 36.♟f4 ♟f5 37.♟d6 and 38.g4**. Obviously this need not be calculated all the way. White is evidently winning early on – how can be answered later on. **29.♟h6 ♟g8 30.♟e4!** Making excellent use of the e4-square. **30...g5 31.♟g4 ♟xa1 32.♟xg5 ♟c2 33.♟f4† ♟f5 34.♟xf5† exf5 35.♟xf5† ♟f6 36.♟xf6 ♟c8 37.♟d5† ♟e8 38.♟h5† ♟d7 39.♟f7#**

28. Tukmakov – Karpov, Leningrad 1973

I borrowed this from an article by Mark Dvoretzky on ChessCafe in retaliation for the fact that he used a position I had originally discovered in the same article! Well, actually I just really liked the position and wanted to use it, so I was very pleased when I saw he had the other position and I could feel justified about using it. Besides, it was Mark who suggested I should have traps in this book in the first place. **33.♟f1!** White is just lost, so any trick is worth a try. The inattentive player might fall for it! **33...♞d2! 0–1** Unfortunately Karpov was never famous for his lack of concentration. He sees the trap and avoids it with the only winning move. **33...♞d7?** with the idea **34.♟xe2? ♞d6!**, is refuted by **34.♞xf7!** and White has a saving check on g6. The main point of the trap is **33...♞b2? 34.♞g6†!!** and White draws after **34...fxg6** (or **34...♞xg6 35.fxg6† ♟xg6 36.♞xf7†** and even though you claim that White is a bit better here, it is minimal) **35.♞g8† ♟h8 36.♞b3†** with perpetual check. **33...♞d6? 34.f6!!+–** would be very unfortunate. And **33...♞e4** is met with: **34.♞g6†!! ♞xg6 35.fxg6† ♟xg6 36.♞c2 f5 37.♞xe4 fxe4 38.♞c8=**

29. Arkell – Holland, Wycombe 2012

White is strategically busted in the Tarrasch Defence – something that can easily happen. He finds a brilliant trap to turn things around. **26.♞a5! ♞e3†!** Black sees what looks like a winning sequence, but he is actually being led into a very deep trap. Black could have won the game with **26...♞b3!**, with variations such as: **27.♞d2 ♞ce7 28.♞h5** and here **28...c5!** is strongest, but also attractive is the trap **28...♞e5!?**, when rather than **29.♟f1!** you could easily imagine yourself playing **29.♟h1**, when Black wins immediately with **29...♞f4!!**. **27.♟f1! ♞h4?** **27...♞e7** would probably still favour Black, but he certainly has reason to regret his previous move. **28.♞xc7 ♞xd3** Black is threatening everything – for example **...♞xf3†** with mate next move. But White has a miracle save: **29.♞d8!! ♞xd8 30.exd3 ♞xe1 31.♟xe1** The tables have turned and Black has a slightly inferior endgame. **31...♞e8† 32.♞e2 ♞xe2†?** This leads to a lost pawn ending. Black still had reasonable saving chances after **32...♞b8!±**. **33.♟xe2 f5 34.f4! fxg4 35.♟f2 c5 36.b3 a5 37.a4** White is in control and won on move 58.

Chapter 9

Tests

I have assembled ten tests, each consisting of six positions. For each test, your goal will be to solve all six positions within the allotted time. Please do not check the solutions before you have solved all six positions. I want to warn you that part of the challenge will be to manage your time wisely and make sure you solve the easier positions correctly (and quickly).

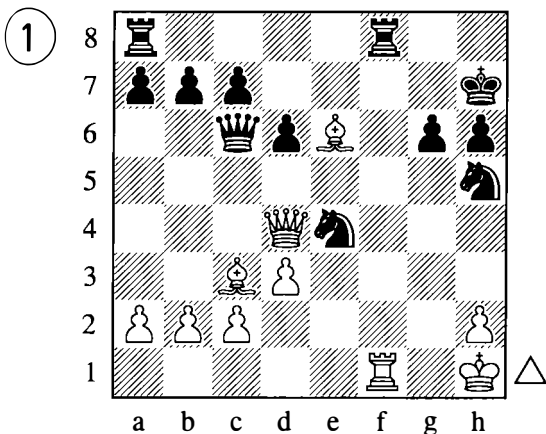
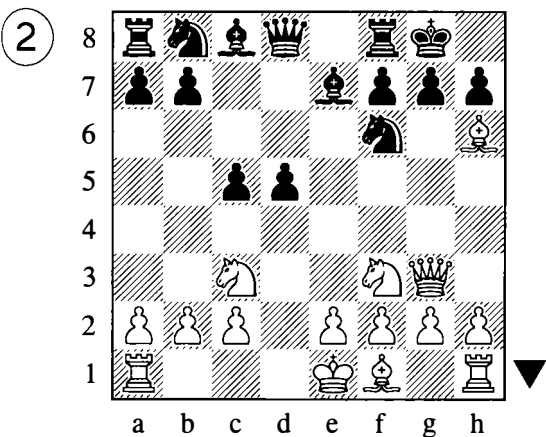
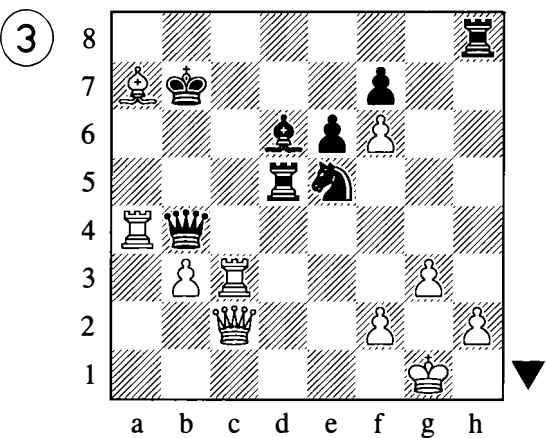
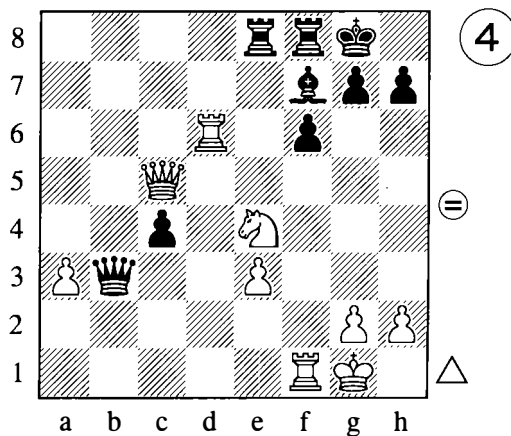
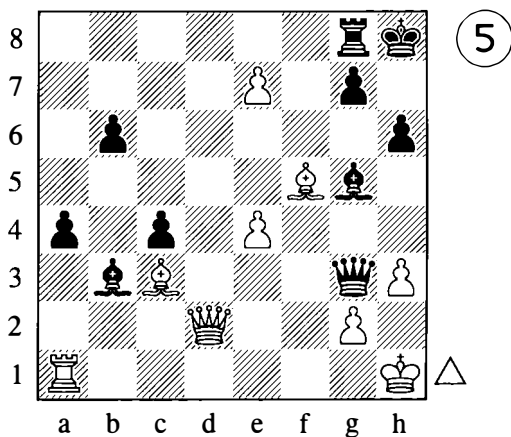
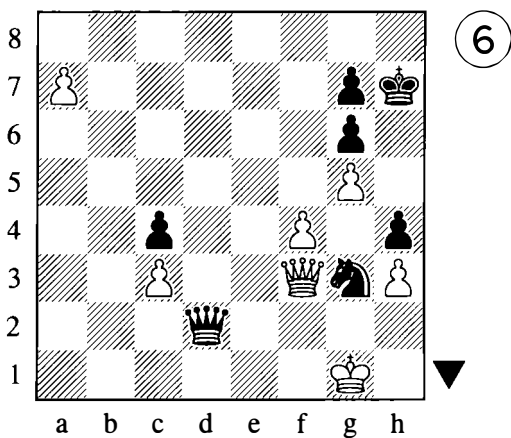
I recommend the following time allotment based on your rating:

Up to 2000	90 minutes
2000-2300	75 minutes
2300-2500	60 minutes
Over 2500	45 minutes

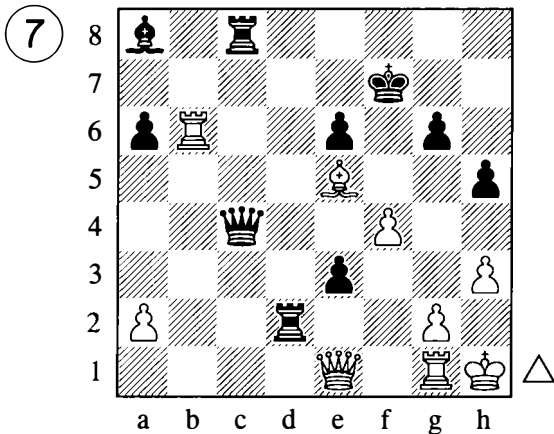
The first test is intended to be somewhat easier than the others, and you should aim to solve it in half the time. The full time allotment will apply for the remaining tests. You will most likely find that the earlier exercises are easier than the later exercises within each test, which should influence your time management.

Please write down the main points of your main lines. This does not mean you need to write down everything you see or all lines, only that you write down *the main points* of the exercise. If you have seen the relevant ideas, you get the point(s) allotted. If not, you don't. And the way to be sure is to write them down!

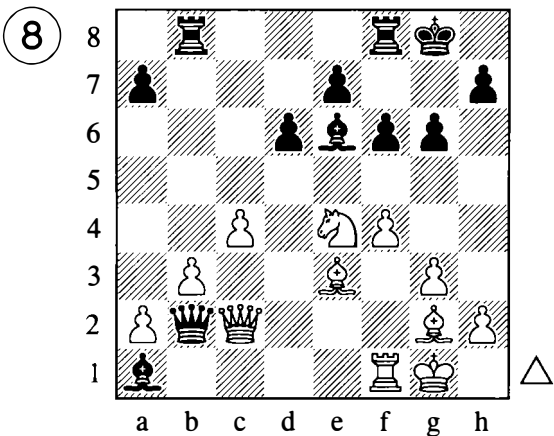
I have allotted points for the things I feel are the soul of the exercises. It is a bit subjective, but I have still guessed the approximate Elo level to which certain test scores will correspond. This is of course in no way scientific, but tests are always more meaningful when they are scored at the end.

Ziska – J. Kristiansen, Candidates**Tripoteau – Huschenbeth, Candidates****Kasparov – Tal, Combinational Vision****Dorrington – Gordon, Combinational Vision****Korchnoi – Yusupov, Candidates****Salgado Lopez – Mamedov, Combinational Vision**

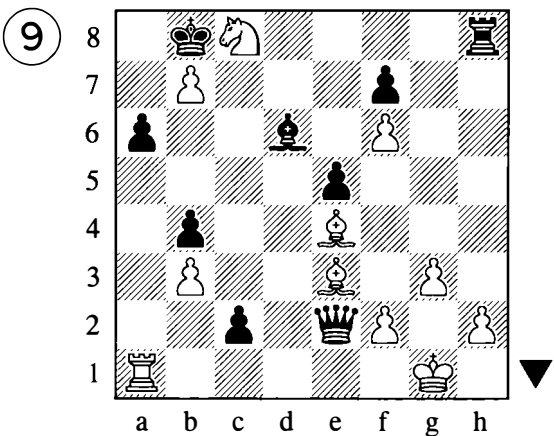
Klein – Getz, Prophylaxis



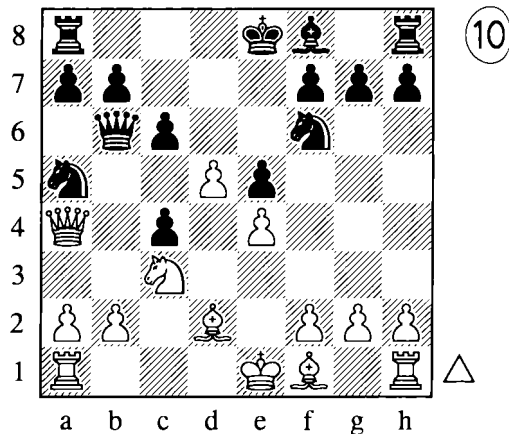
Wojtkiewicz – Wahls, Candidates



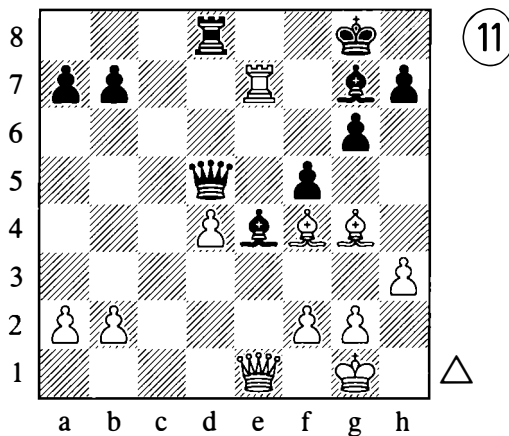
Lalev – Ninov, Intermediate Moves



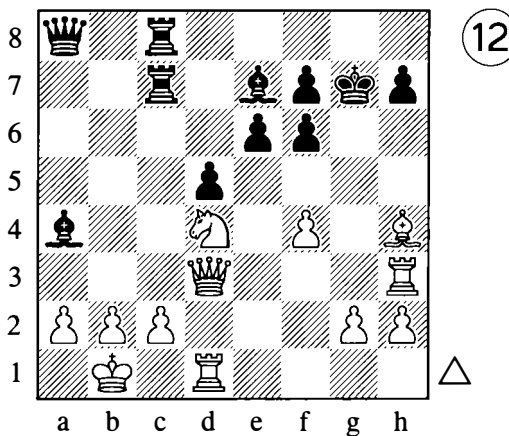
Khairullin – Mamedyarov, Candidates



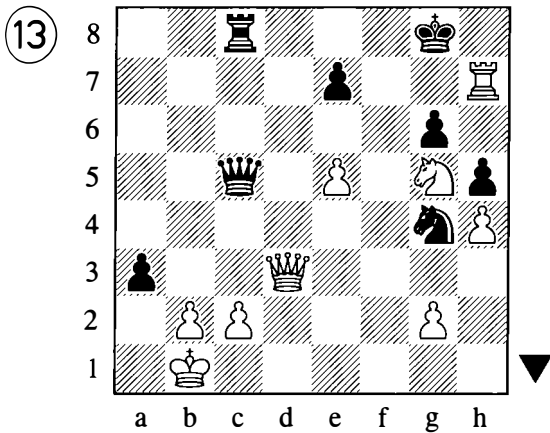
Guliev – Grigorian, Imagination



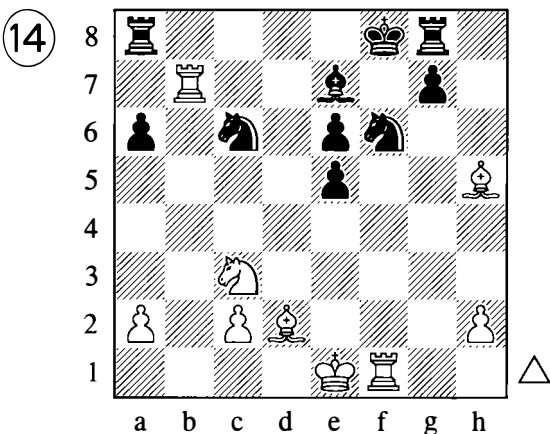
Volokitin – Shishkin, Imagination



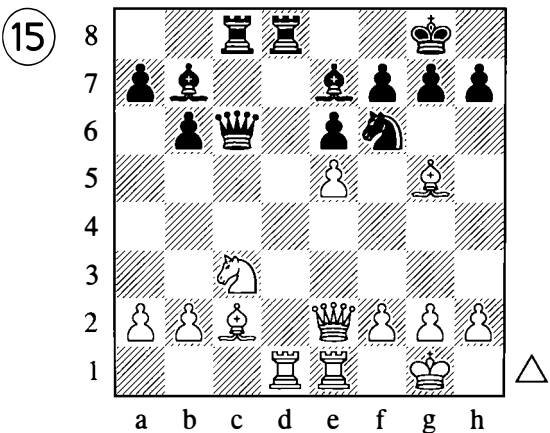
Valenti – Del Nevo, Candidates



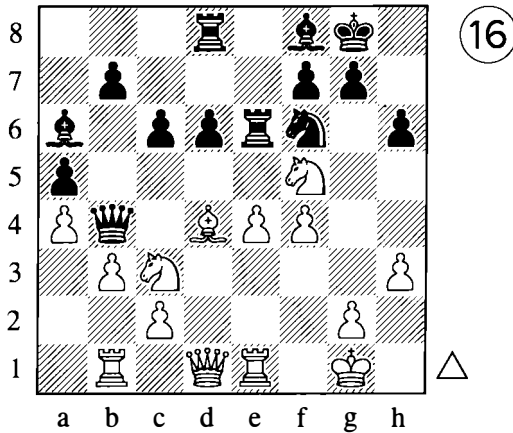
Adhiban – Gao Rui, Intermediate Moves



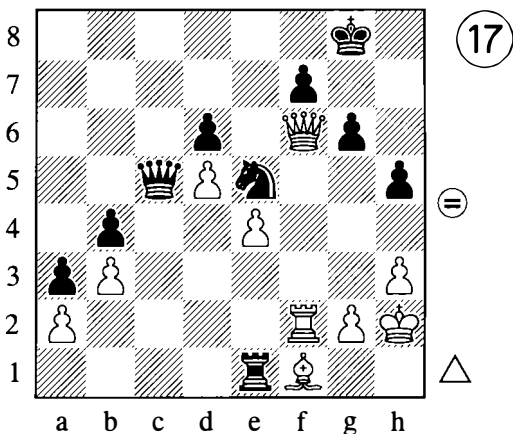
Landenbergue – Pavlovic, Candidates



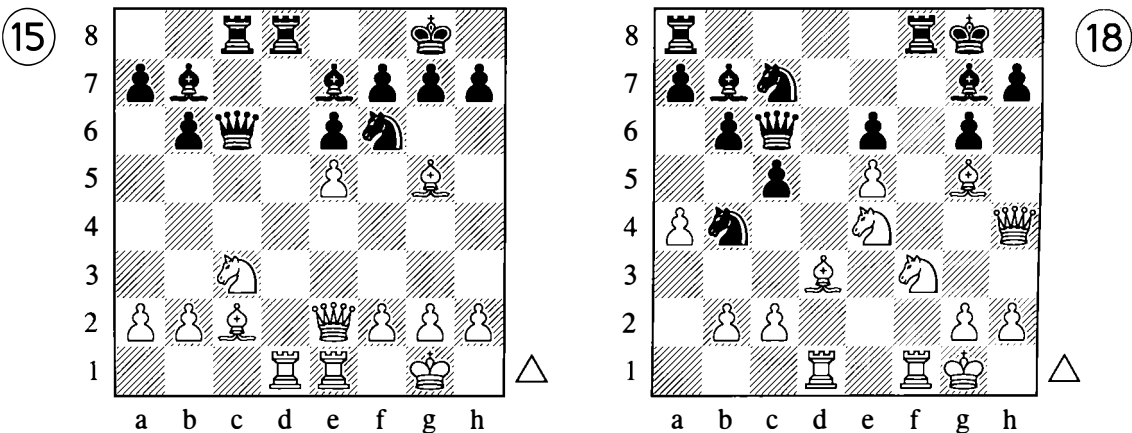
Naroditsky – Altounian, Prophylaxis



Kobese – Mamedov, Imagination

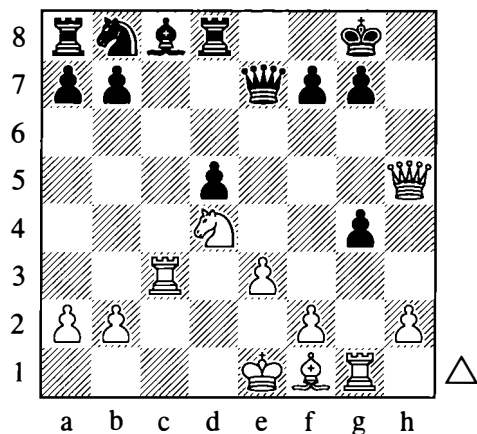


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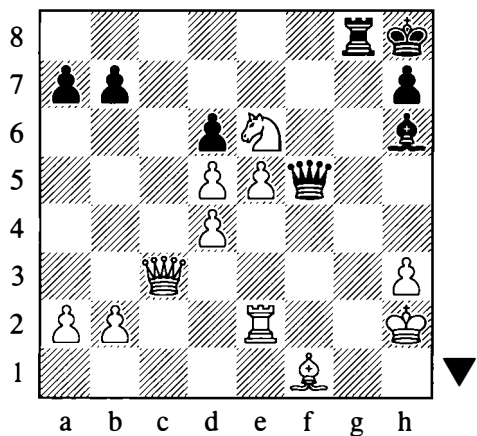


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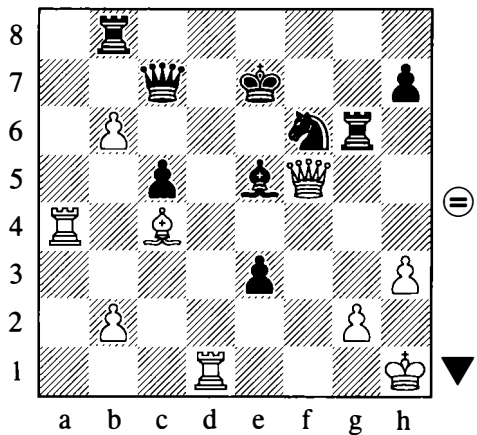
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**Eljanov – Mchedlishvili, Candidates**

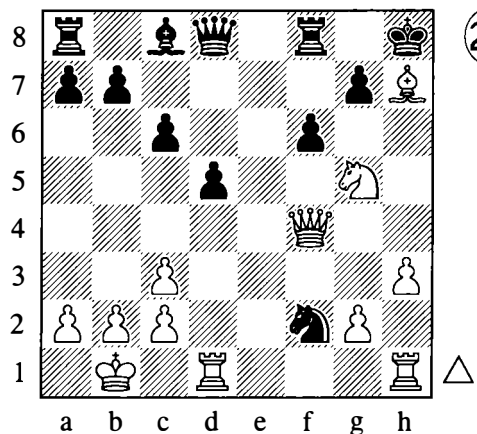
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**Korchnoi – Vallejo Pons, Elimination**

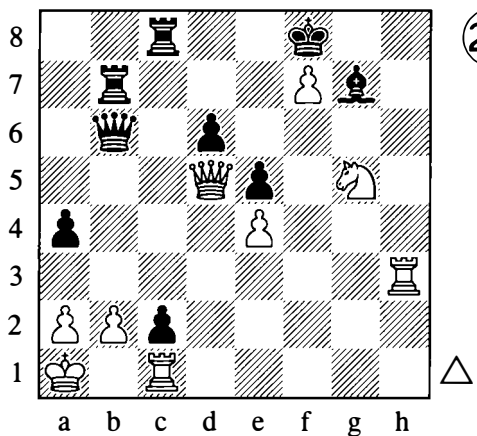
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**Anand – Kasimdzhanov, Intermediate Moves**

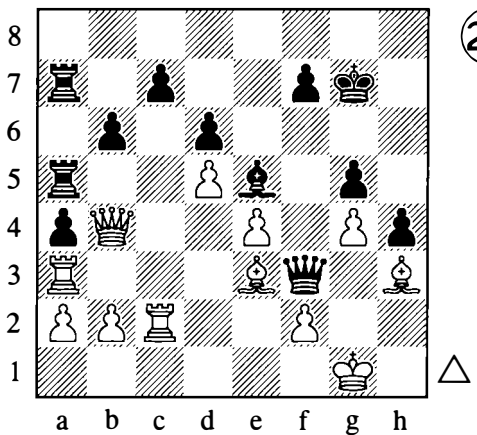
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**Topalov – Zvjaginsev, Candidates**

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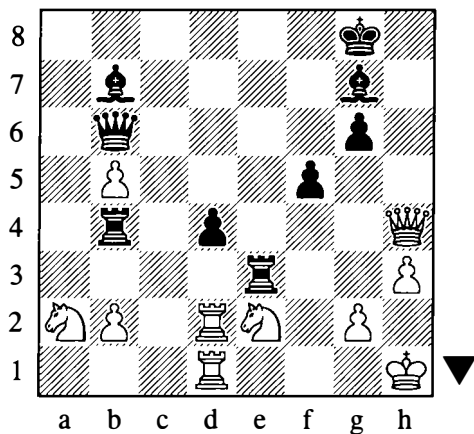
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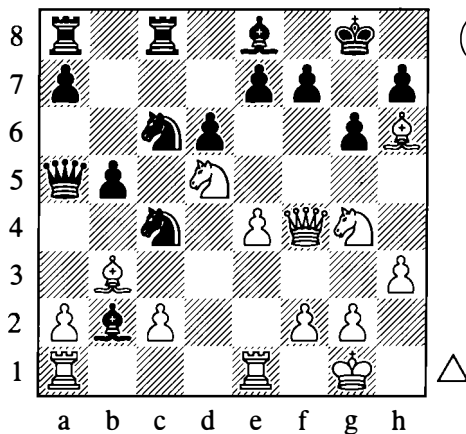


Adams – Paragua, Intermediate Moves**Kulaots – Libiszewski, Combinational Vision**

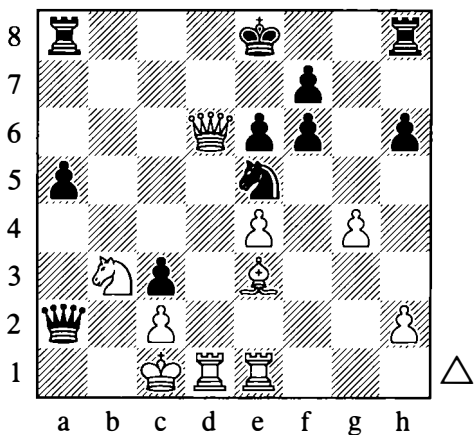
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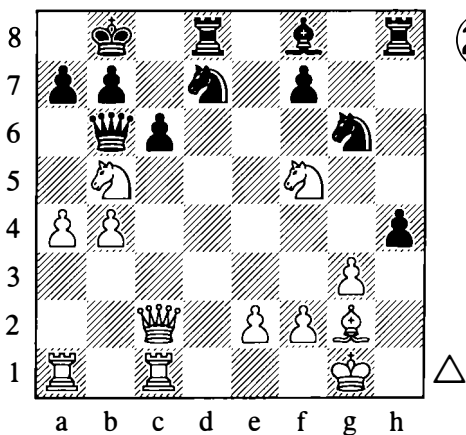
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**De la Riva Aguado – Caruana, Imagination****Kasimdzhanov – Predojevic, Combinational Vision**

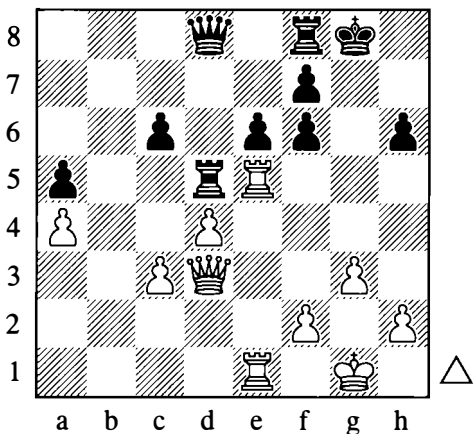
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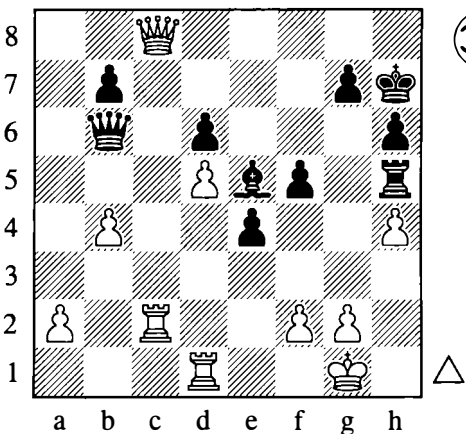
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**Vachier-Lagrave – Pelletier, Candidates****Goganov – Khismatullin, Candidates**

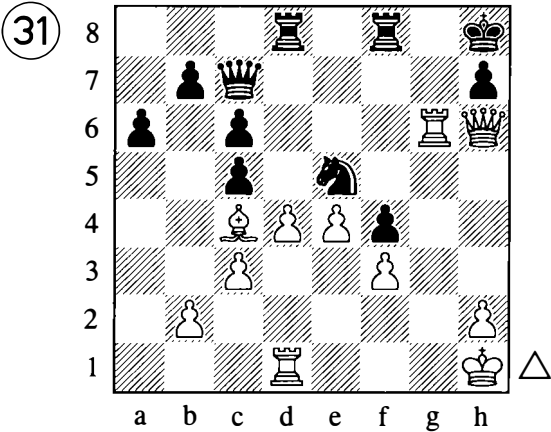
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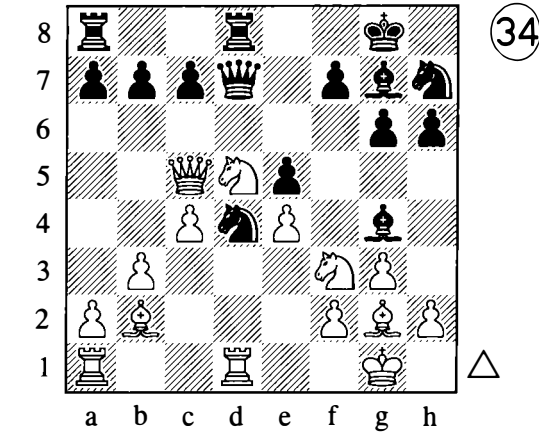
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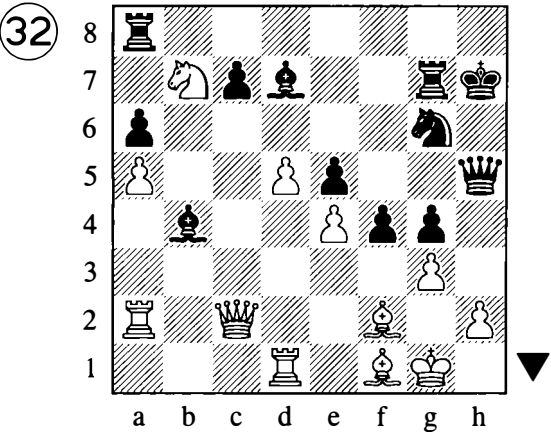
Nguyen – Vrana, Candidates



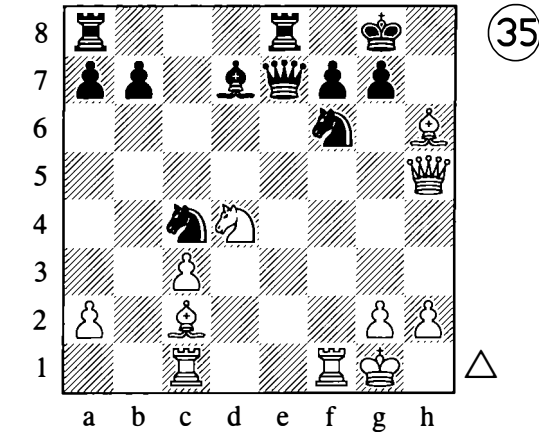
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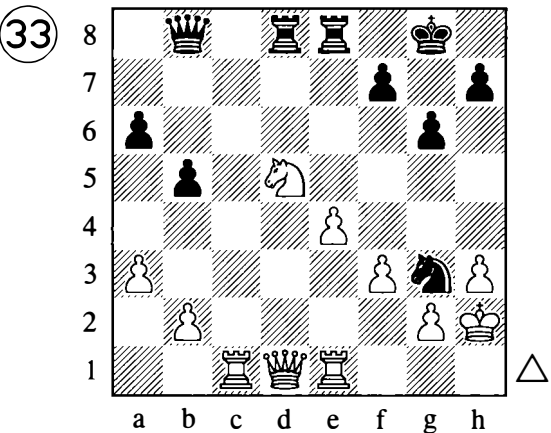
Topalov – Rapport, Imagination



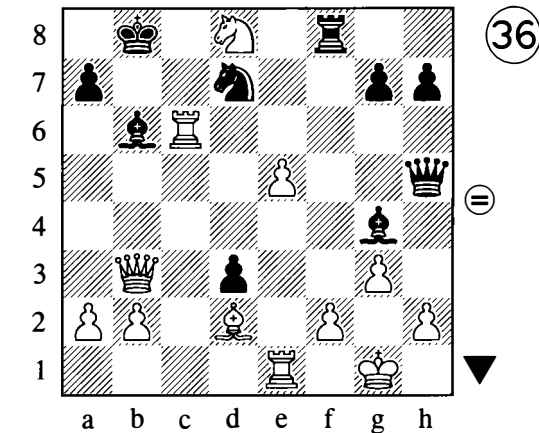
Gustafsson – Efimenko, Combinational Vision



Gashimov – Akopian, Candidates

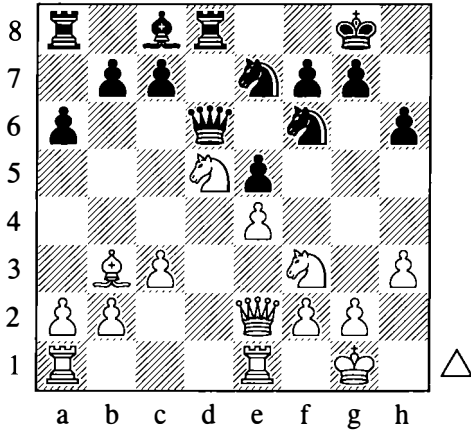


Sreeves – Gupta, Candidates



Xu Yuhua – T. Kosintseva, Prophylaxis

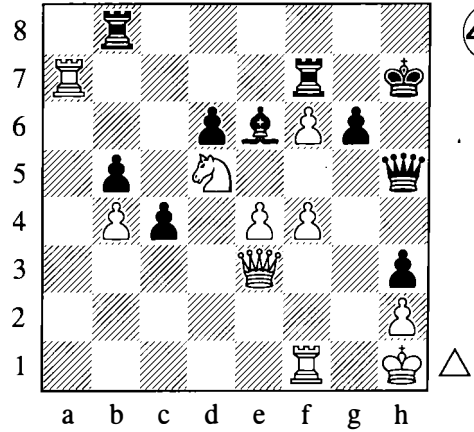
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Bu Xiangzhi – Pelletier, Candidates

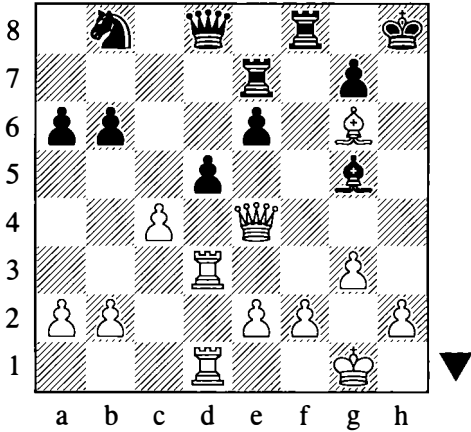
Sasikiran – Calistri, Intermediate Moves

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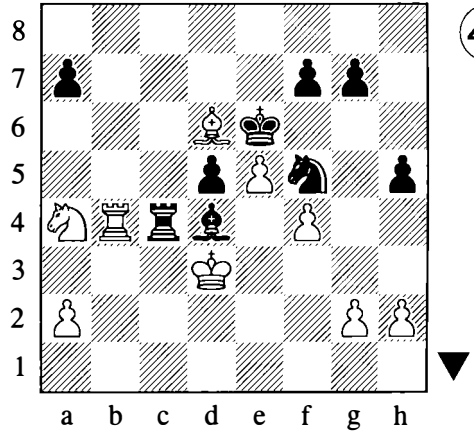
Edouard – Stewart, Candidates

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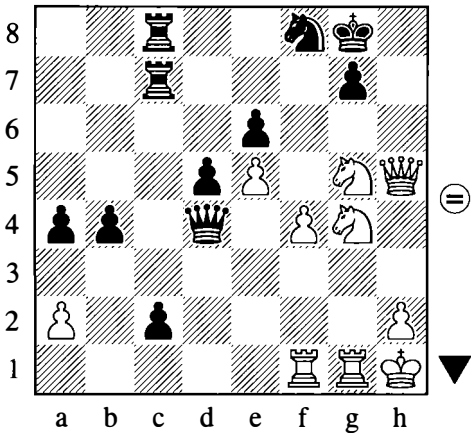
Movsesian – Zatonskih, Elimination

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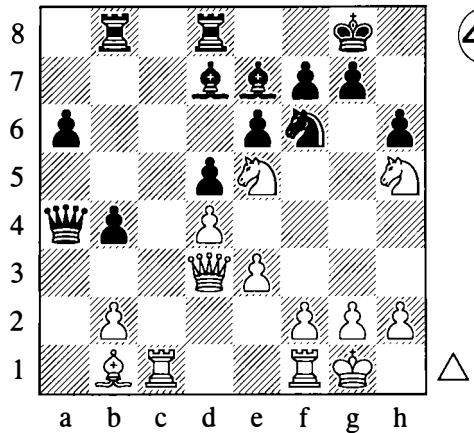


Su.B. Hansen – Baramidze, Combinational Vision

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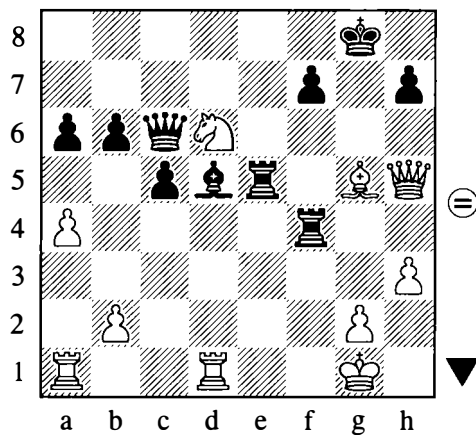


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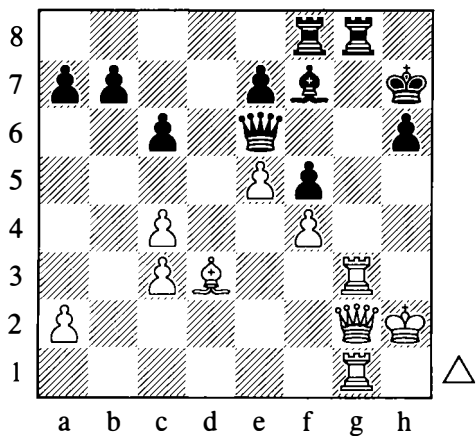
Portisch – Radulov, Prophylaxis

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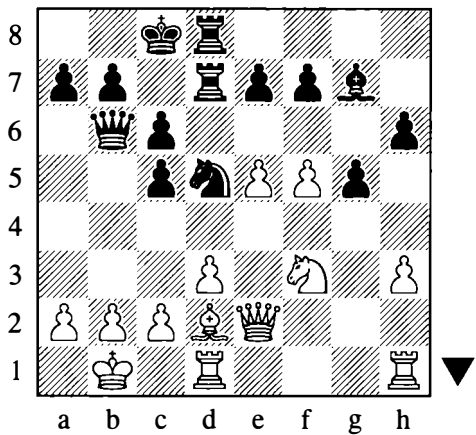
S. Ernst – Karisik, Candidates

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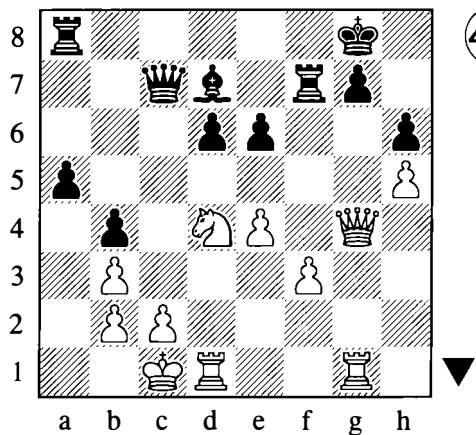
Bologan – Naiditsch, Candidates

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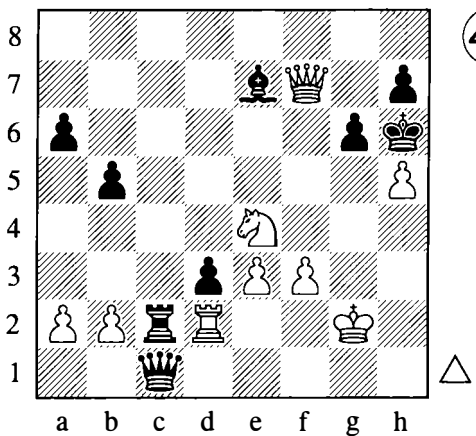
Fischer – Larsen, Intermediate Moves

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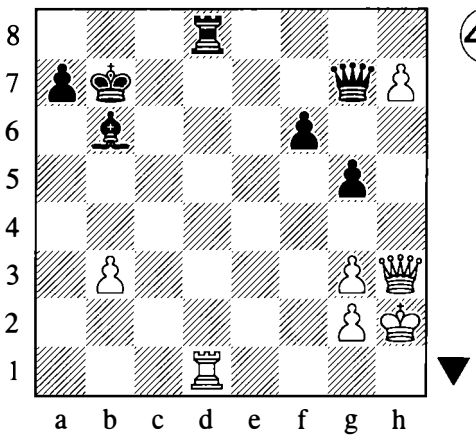
Naiditsch – V. Mikhalevski, Imagination

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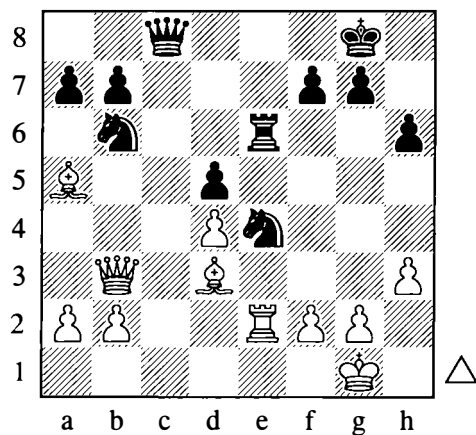
Firman – McShane, Candidates

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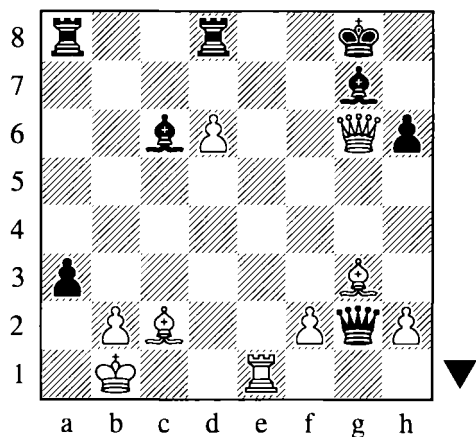
Markus – Perunovic, Prophylaxis

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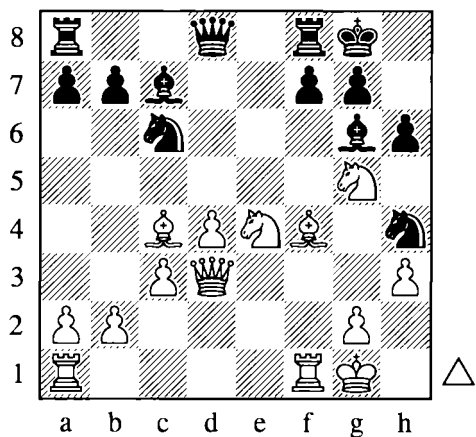
Smirnov – Timofeev, Candidates

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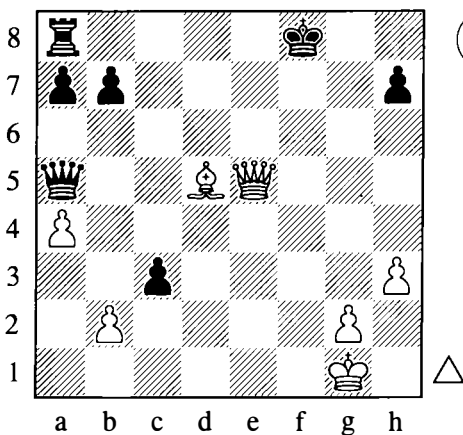
Williams – Genovese, Comparison

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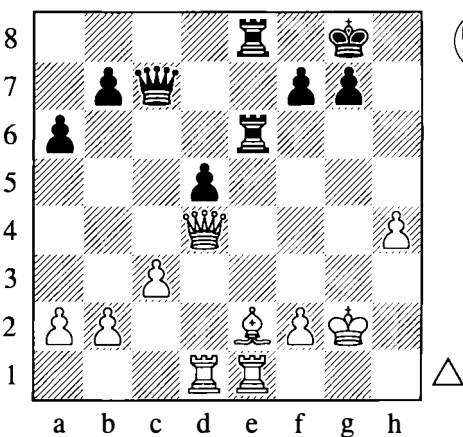
Inarkiev – Diu, Imagination

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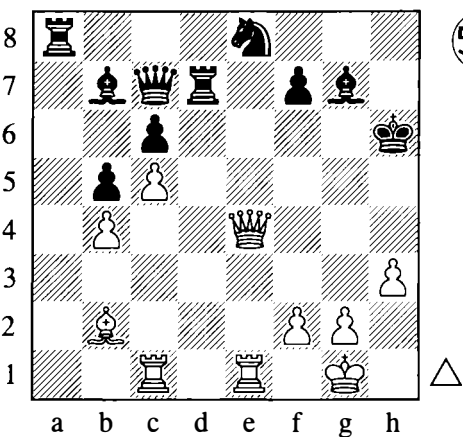
N. Kosintseva – Romanko, Imagination

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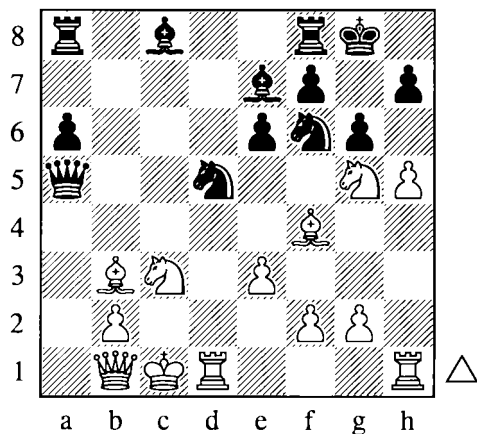
Morozevich – Movsesian, Combinational Vision

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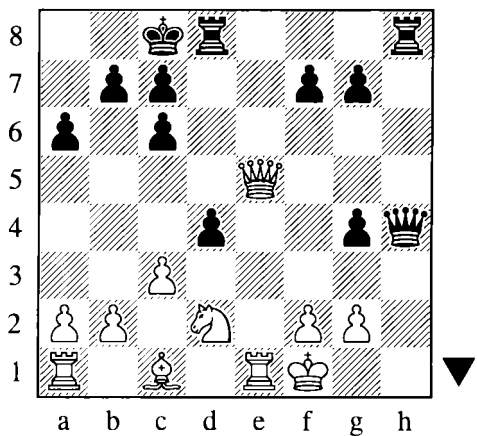


Fridman – Harikrishna, Prophylaxis

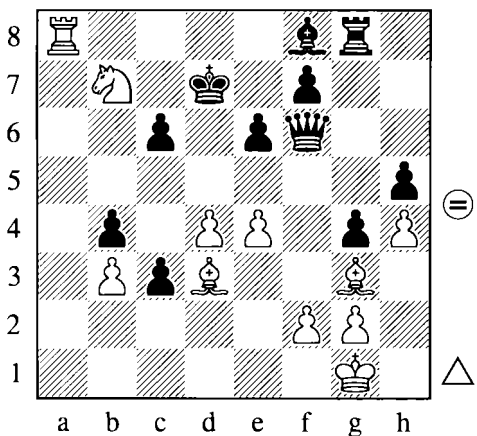
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**Haznedaroglu – Isaev, Candidates**

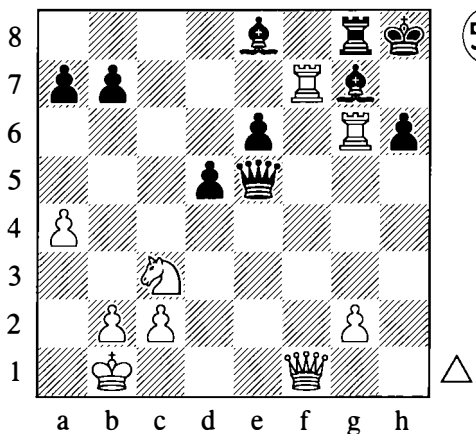
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**Grischuk – Aronian, Elimination**

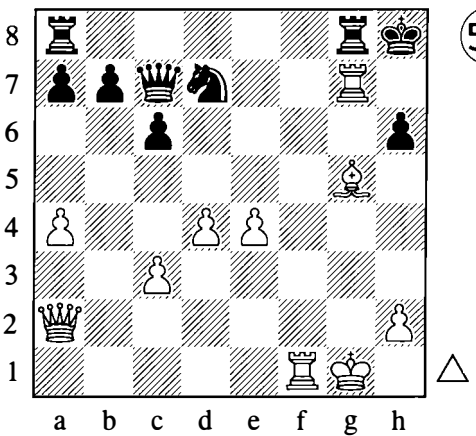
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**Marholev – Rotstein, Intermediate Moves**

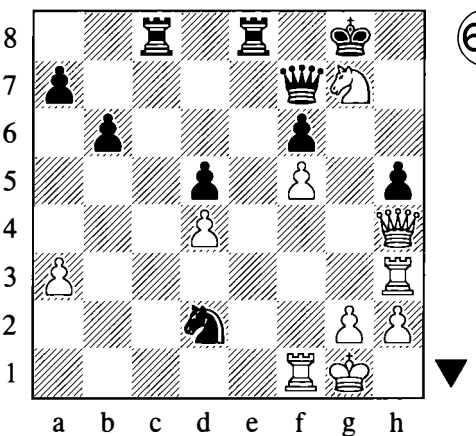
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**Dzagnidze – Danielian, Combinational Vision**

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**Jobava – Wojtaszek, Combinational Vision**

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TEST 1

1. Ziska – J. Kristiansen, Helsingør (var) 2012

Black avoided this position by not playing 31...♖f6xe4?? and instead won after 31...♚ae8! followed by ...♚e5!. He did this because he was afraid of 32.♙h8†, which does indeed lead to a spectacular win, but White has an even stronger option in: **32.♙g8†!!** (1 point) **32...♚xc8** 32...♙xg8 33.♙h8# **33.♚f7† ♚g7** **34.♚xg7† ♙h8** **35.♚xc7†** and wins.

2. Tripoteau – Huschenbeth, Merlimont 2011

Black trapped the queen in elegant fashion. **10...♖h5!** 10...♖g4 11.♙f4 d4 is good for Black, but the game is conclusive. **11.♙e5 ♙f6! 12.♙xh5 g6** (1 point) Trapped. **13.♙xf8 gxh5 14.♙xc5 ♖c6** Black won on move 30. ...0–1

3. Kasparov – Tal, Moscow (var) 1983

29...♖f3†!! 30.♚xf3 This leads to mate, but there were no real alternatives. 30.♙f1 ♙b5†! 31.♚ac4 ♖d2† and Black wins. **30...♙e1† 31.♙g2 ♚xh2†!** (1 point) **32.♙xh2 ♚h5† 33.♚h4 ♚xh4† 34.♙g2 ♙h1#**

4. Dorrington – Gordon, Hinckley Island 2011

White should force a perpetual check with: **29.♚dx6!** The game went 29.♙d4? ♙g6 and Black won on move 39. **29...gx6** 29...♙d3?! 30.♚6f4± does not make a lot of sense. **30.♖xf6† ♙g7** And here White has two ways to make a draw. Either with 31.♖xe8† ♚xe8 32.♚xf7† (1 point) or with **31.♙g5† ♙g6 32.♖h5† ♙g8 33.♚xf8† ♚xf8 34.♙d5† ♙f7 35.♙g5†=** (1 point).

5. Korchnoi – Yusupov, Puhajarva 2011

White could have won the game immediately with a small combination. **32.♙xg7†!** Instead White lost instantly after: 32.♙d5?? ♙xe7 0–1 **32...♙xg7 33.♙d7!** (1 point) The pawn queens and Black cannot give up his rook or bishop for it on account of the mate on h7.

6. Salgado Lopez – Mamedov, Moscow 2011

53...♖e2†! Instead the game ended in a draw after: 53...♙c1†? 54.♙h2 ♖f1† 55.♙g2 ♖e3† 56.♙f2 ♙d2† 57.♙g1 ♙e1† 58.♙h2 ♖f1† 59.♙g2 ♖e3† 60.♙h2 ♙d2† 61.♙g1 ♙c1† 62.♙f2 ♙d2† ½–½ **54.♙f1 54.♙xe2 ♙xe2 55.a8=♙ ♙e1† 56.♙g2 ♙xc3** and Black wins. **54...♖xf4! 55.a8=♙ ♙c1† 56.♙f2 ♖d3†** (1 point) Black wins after either 57.♙e2 ♙e1# or 57.♙g2 ♖e1†.

TEST 2

7. Klein – Getz, Oslo 2011

Black has obvious counterplay against g2. But at times we need to understand that our opponent's elaborate plans may not actually work: **41. ♖h4!! ♙xg2† 42. ♕h2** (1 point) White has no fear of the discovered check. This is the joy of opposite-coloured bishops. **42... ♙f3†** Black has nothing better. **42... ♕e8 43. ♖f6 ♙c6† 44. ♕g3 ♖c5** offers a degree of resistance, but it goes down in the end: **45. ♖xe6† ♕d8 46. ♖gb1** (46. ♖f7!? and other moves win as well, though it may take some time.) **46... e2 47. ♙f6† ♕c7 48. ♖xc6† ♖xc6 49. ♖e7† ♖d7 50. ♖c5† ♖c6 51. ♖a7† ♕d6 52. ♖e7† ♕d5 53. ♖e5† ♕c4 54. ♖c1† ♕b4 55. ♙e7† ♕a4 56. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 57. ♖e4†** Black is mated. On **42... ♙c6† 43. ♕g3 g5** White has **44. ♖xh5†** winning. **43. ♕g3 g5! 44. ♖xg5!** (2 points) In this case Black's plans do not work! **44... ♖g8 45. ♖xg8† ♕xg8 46. ♕xf3† ♕h7 47. ♖b7† ♕h6 48. ♙g7† ♕h7 49. ♙f6† ♕h6 50. ♙g5† ♕g6 51. ♙e7† ♕f7 52. ♙d6† ♕f6 53. ♙e5† ♕f5 54. ♖g5#**

8. Wojtkiewicz – Wahls, Geneva 1995

It looks as if Black has won the exchange, but actually the bishop on a1 is trapped! **19. ♖b1!!** (2 points) Easy to miss. **19... ♙xc4 19... ♖xb1 20. ♖xb1 ♙xc4** (20... f5 21. ♕g5 and White wins) **21. ♖xa1** transposes. **20. ♖xa1 ♖xa1 21. ♖xa1±** White won on move 31.

9. Lalev – Ninov, Bulgaria 2011

29... ♙c5!! (1 point) A really lovely combination when you check the details. **29... ♖xc8 30. bxc8=♖† ♕xc8 31. ♖c1** would have given White some chances in a roughly equal position. **30. ♙xc5 ♖xe4** White draws after **30... ♖xc8 31. ♙a7† ♕c7 32. ♙b6† ♕b8. 31. ♙a7† ♕xb7** White resigned, realizing that his plan of winning the queen with **32. ♕d6† ♕xa7 33. ♕xe4** was nothing more than a nightmare: **33... ♖d8!** (2 points) **0–1**

10. Khairullin – Mamedyarov, Yurmala 2012

The knight on a5 looks to be in trouble. On the other hand Black is attacking b2 and potentially f2. Everything is solved with one move! **12. ♕d1!** (1 point) **12... ♕xe4 13. ♙xa5 ♖a6?** Objectively better was **13... ♕c5 14. ♖a3** (14. ♙xb6 ♕xa4 15. ♙a5 cxd5± is less serious) **14... ♕d3† 15. ♙xd3 ♙xa3 16. ♙xb6 ♙b4† 17. ♕c3 cxd3 18. ♙c7 ♕d7 19. d6±** White has good winning chances, but the game is not yet over. **14. ♙xc4 b5 15. dxc6! 1–0**

11. Guliev – Grigorian, Abu Dhabi 2010

The first two moves are rather obvious, but the third takes a good deal of imagination. **21. ♙d1! ♖xd4 22. ♙b3† ♕h8 23. ♖a5!!** (3 points) The queen is ideally placed here. White is threatening ♖xg7, leaving Black in serious trouble finding a move. **23... b6 23... ♙f6** is refuted by many moves, among them: **24. ♖c7! ♙xe7 25. ♙e5† ♙f6 26. ♙xd4 ♖xd4 27. ♖f7** with mate. **24. ♖xa7** With the threat of ♙h6!. **24... ♙d5 25. ♖c7 25. ♙xd5! 25... ♙xb3 26. ♖xg7 ♖c8 27. ♖xc8† ♕xg7 28. ♖c7† 1–0**

12. Volokitin – Shishkin, Baile Herculane 2010

White is of course much better, but there is only one direct win: **25.g5!!** (1 point) **25...h5** White wins after: 25...fxg5 26.♖xh7† ♕f6 27.♗h6# **26.g6†!!** (1 point) 26.♖xh5?! as played in the game should also win. But instead of resigning Black could have tried 26...♖h8!, when White needs to find 27.g6†!. However, after 27...♖xh6 28.♖xh6 ♕xh6 29.♗h3† ♕g7 30.♖d3 ♖d8 31.♖g3† ♕f8 32.♗h6† ♕e7 33.♖g8 ♖d6 34.♗f8† ♖e7 35.♗xd8† ♗xd8 36.♖xd8† ♖d7 there would still be some work to do. **26...♕xh6** 27.♖xh5†! ♕xh5 28.♗h7† ♕g4 29.♗g7† ♕xf4 30.♕e2† ♕e3 31.♗g3† ♕xe2 32.♗e1#

TEST 3

13. Valenti – Del Nevo, Arco (var) 2010

I found this while analysing. I just loved the simplicity of opening of the a-file. That the line is quite long without serious branching is only a bonus. **37...a2!** (1 point) **38.♟a1** **38.♟xa2 ♖a8†** **39.♟b3 ♜b6†** transposes. **38...♜g1†** **39.♟xa2 ♖a8†** **40.♟b3 ♜b6†** **41.♟c3 ♜c8†** **42.♟d2 ♜f2†** **42...♜d8?** **43.♜h8†!=** **43.♟c1 ♜e1†** **44.♜d1 ♜xc2!** (3 points) **45.♟xc2 ♜e3†** Black wins.

14. Adhiban – Gao Rui, Mashhad 2011

White's winning combination is a perfect illustration of the "quiet move." **29.♜xf6!** In the game play was unclear after **29.♜c7? ♜d8!**, although White won on move 41. **29...gxf6** **30.♜h6† ♜g7** So far, so good. The next move is the one to surprise. **31.♜c7!!** (1 point) White wins, as pointed out by Michel Rudolf. **31.♜xg7†? ♟xg7** **32.♜c7** is perhaps more normal-looking, but it would be wrong. After **32...♜h8!** **33.♜e2 ♜d4** **34.♜xe7† ♟g6** **35.♜d3† f5** **36.♜e2 ♟f6** **37.♜c7 ♜f3†** **38.♟f2 ♜d2** Black's drawing chances are at least as good as White's winning chances.

15. Landenbergue – Pavlovic, Biel 2007

One of the important things when we talk about candidate moves is to realize when you have a choice. Here White clearly did not think he did. After **20.f3? ♜d5** Black was fine. **21.♜xe7 ♜xe7** **22.♜e3 ♜a6** **23.♜e4 ♜c7** **24.f4 h6** **25.h3 ♜b8 ½–½**

Instead White could have reached a very favourable position with: **20.♜f1!** (1 point) **20...♜d5** **21.♜xe7 ♜xe7** **22.♜e4** Black is lacking the check on c5 here. And after **22...♜c7** **23.♜b5!** White loses an exchange, so Black is forced to allow: **22...♜d5** **23.♜xd5 exd5** **24.♜f5 ♜b8** **25.♜d3 g6** **26.e6!** and life is unpleasant.

16. Naroditsky – Altounian, Lubbock 2011

24.♜a1!! (1 point) **24.♜a2 ♜a3** **25.♜a1 ♜xe4** does not work in the same way. After **26.♜c1 ♜b4** **27.♜xe4 ♜xe4** White needs to avoid **28.c3? ♜xd4!** and instead play **28.♜xh6† gxf6** **29.♜g4†** with perpetual check. **24.♜xh6†! gxf6** **25.f5** (1 point) **25...d5!** **26.♜a2!** (**26.fxe6 ♜c5** **27.♜xc5 ♜xc5†** **28.♟h2 ♜xc3** **29.e5** also wins, but is a bit shaky.) **26...♜e7** **27.fxe6 dxe4** **28.♜xf6!** also wins. **24...g6** **25.♜a2 ♜a3** **26.♜c1** (1 point) **26...♜xa1** **26...♜b4** **27.c3** **27.♜xa1 gxf5** **28.exf5 ♜xe1†** **29.♜xe1 ♜g7** **30.♜h4 1–0**

17. Kobese – Mamedov, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010

White missed a lovely way to hold this awful position. **42.g4!!** (1 point) **42.♜c4?** lost on move 55 in the game. This could have happened sooner after **42...♜b1!** followed by **...♜b2**. **42...♜b1** **42...hxg4** **43.♜d8†=** **43.gxh5 ♜b2** **44.♜e2!** (2 points) **44...♜e3** **45.hxg6 fxf6** **46.♜d8†** With perpetual check.

18. Karjakin – Ivanchuk, Medias 2011

18. ♖f6+! 18... ♙f6± **18... ♙xf6** 18... ♗xf6 19.exf6+– **19. ♙xg6!!** (1 point) 19.exf6 ♜xd3 20. ♗xd3±
19... hxg6 **20. ♙xf6** ♗xf6 **21.exf6!** The strongest. White also wins after 21. ♗xf6 ♗e8 22. ♗h4!
 (or 22. ♜g5!? ♜cd5 23. ♗f2+–) 22... ♙xf3 23. ♗xf3 ♜bd5 24. ♗h3 with a decisive attack. **21... ♗f8**
22. ♗g5 1–0

TEST 4

19. Ragger – Alekseev, Khanty-Mansiysk (1.3) 2011

The opening has been a total disaster for Black. All attacking players would look for the knock-out blow at this point. And even though the game is a rapid game, they would invest most of their time trying to find it, with the certainty that a better chance to win the game is unlikely to present itself. However, Ragger is more of a technical player and he did not approach the position with the deep-down desire to include all of the pieces in the attack that a true attacking player would. **17.♖xc8?** This is an extremely tempting sacrifice and is not objectively wrong, but the (very human) idea behind it is deeply flawed. **17...♖xc8 18.♜xg4?** Throwing away the chance of a direct win, which existed after **18.♔d3! ♜b4†** (18...g6 19.♔xg6 fxg6 20.♜xg6† ♜g7 21.♜e6†! would justify the sacrifice on c8) **19.♔d1 ♔c6 20.♜xg4** White has a winning attack. **18...♜f8 19.♔e6 ♜c1†!** (1 point) An important intermediate move. Black now escapes to an ending with saving chances. **20.♔d2 fxex6 21.♜xe6† ♜f7 22.♜xf7† ♔xf7 23.♔xc1** White has a technically winning position, but it is not without complications. In the game Black fought on valiantly and eventually managed to hold the draw in 71 moves. ...½–½

The most flexible win was therefore: **17.♔d3!** (3 points), with the point that after **17...g6 18.♔xg6 fxg6 19.♜xg6† ♜g7 20.♜h5** White wins. He is threatening both ♖xc4 and ♔f5, both entirely decisive. And **20...♔c6**, preventing them both (21.♔f5? ♔xf5 22.♜xf5 ♔e5–+), fails to **21.♔xc6 bxc6 22.♖xc6 ♔f8 23.♖g6** with a winning attack.

20. Eljanov – Mchedlishvili, Konya (var) 2011

This position arose in my analysis of the game and I thought it was a nice little exercise in candidates. Black can of course play **31...♜xf1**, but after **32.♜e1** the path to an advantage is not so clear. On **32...♖g2†** White can play **33.♖xg2 ♜xe1 34.♜c2!** and the position after **34...♔f8 35.♜c8** offers no advantage. Black can try **34...♔g8 35.exd6 ♔d2 36.d7 ♔a5**, but the consequences of this are far from clear. So **32...♔f4†!** is stronger: **33.♔xf4 ♜xf4† 34.♔h1 ♖g3 35.♔h2 ♜e3† 36.♔g1 ♖xh3 37.exd6 ♜g4† 38.♖g2 ♜xd4† 39.♖f2 ♖g3† 40.♔h1 ♜xd5† 41.♔h2 ♜xd6 42.♖f6 ♜xf6 43.♔xg3 ♔g7** and Black has chances to win the game. A long line and all superfluous if Black just finds: **31...♔f4†! 32.♔h1 ♔d2!!** (2 points), when **...♜xf1** comes with check.

21. Korchnoi – Vallejo Pons, Gibraltar 2011

28...♖xb6? 29.♜da1?? Vallejo is saved by pure dumb luck. White was winning in one move with **29.♜a7!!** (1 point), forcing: **29...♜xa7 30.♜xe5† ♔f8 31.♜d8† ♔g7 32.♖g8†!** Probably the move Korchnoi missed? **32...♔h6 33.♜f4† ♔h5** and now both **34.g4†** and **34.♔e2†** are mate in four. **29...♔f8** Black wins. **30.♔d5 e2 31.♜f2 ♔d4 32.♜xe2 ♔xd5 33.♜a8† ♔g7 34.♜f3 ♔h6 35.♜1a7 ♜f4 0–1**

28...♜xb6? **29.♜xe5† ♔f8** is refuted by **30.♜a6!** (or **30.♜d6!**, which wins in the much same way) **30...♜xb2 (30...♜e8 31.♜c3 and wins) 31.♜d8†!** (1 point – whether with ♜a6 or ♜d6) **31...♔g7 32.♖g8† ♔h6 33.♜xe3† ♔h5 34.♔e2†** and Black is mated.

So we need to find a new idea for Black. The only one around is **28...e2!!** (3 points), which would disrupt White's play after **29.♙xe2** for example, where the bishop no longer covers the vital g8-square. White's best move is therefore: **29.♞e1! ♜xb6 30.♞xe2 ♜d7 31.♞f7† 31.♞d2 ♜d4 32.♞e2† ♜e5** is a nice little repetition. **31...♜d8 32.♞a8† ♞b8 33.♞d2 ♜d4 34.♞e2 ♜e5** With a draw.

22. Anand – Kasimdzhanov, Tashkent (rapid) 2011

18.♜f7†! (1 point) A small desperado that brings the rook to an inferior square. **18...♞xf7 19.♜g6 ♜xd1!?** This allows the World Champion to show his idea. A tougher defence was provided by **19...f5 20.♞xf2 ♞f8**, but White has a winning attack after **21.♞d4!** (1 point) **21...♜g8 22.♞g3!** all the same. For example: **22...♜e6 23.♞h4 ♞f6 (23...♞f6 24.♞h7 ♜f7 25.♜xf5** also wins a pawn for now and more later on.) **24.♜h7†!** Not the only tempting move, but this one wins bits directly. **24...♜f7 25.♞c7† ♞e7 26.♜g6† ♜f6 27.♞g3!** The black king is now in terrible danger. For example: **27...♜f7 28.♞h6!** and White wins material. **20.♞h4† ♜g8 21.♞e1!** (1 point) White keeps the black king trapped on the kingside. And please notice that it is important this move is played now and not a move later. After **21.♞h7†? ♜h8 22.♞e1** Black escapes with a draw after **22...♜xc3† 23.bxc3 ♜e6! 24.♞xe6 ♞b6†** with perpetual check. **21...♜xc3† 22.bxc3 ♜e6 23.♞xe6 ♞b6† 24.♜c1** Black resigned. **24...♞g1† 25.♞e1** is the important difference from the previous note. **1–0**

23. Topalov – Zvjaginsev, Tilburg (var) 1998

Topalov avoided this line, probably uncertain about what to do here. The solution is quite stunning! **35.♞b3!! axb3 36.♞e6!** (1 point) Threatening **♜h7#**. There is no defence: **36...♜h6 37.♞xh6† ♜e7 38.♞e6† ♜f8 39.♞f6** Black is mated on the next move.

24. Moradiabadi – Ganguly, Mashhad 2011

This was the last round of the Asian Championships and both players had to win to qualify. Black, seeing no other way, rolled the dice. Unfortunately it did not come up with a six, but rather a zero... **41.♞e1!!** (1 point) White has to find this move to do well. After **41.♞d2? ♞xh3 42.f4 ♞xg4† 43.♞g2 ♞d1† 44.♜h2** Black has a fine resource in **44...g4!.** (Whereas **44...♜f6 45.e5! ♜d8 46.fxg5 ♞xd5 47.♞xh4 ♜g8 48.♜xb6!** would lead to a deadly attack.) **45.fxe5 g3† 46.♞xg3†** Forced. **46...hxc3† 47.♜xg3 ♞a8** Black's chances are higher in this messy position. **41...♞xe4** Desperation. White wins after **41...♞xh3 42.f4!!** (1 point), when the queen is trapped. **42.♞d1 ♞xd5 43.♞d2 ♞xd2 44.♜xd2 ♜xb2 45.♜g2 ♞d4 46.♞c2 f5 47.♞c3 a3 48.♞c4 ♞f6 49.gxf5 ♞e7 50.♞g4 ♜f6 51.♜c3 ♜h6 52.♞e4 ♜e5 53.♜xe5 dxe5 54.♞c6† ♞d6 55.♞e8** **1–0**

TEST 5

25. Adams – Paragua, Khanty-Mansiysk (1.2) 2011

Black is much better here. He could take on b5 and rely on technique. What he played was not really bad, but slowly White was able to get back into the game and hold. The chance to decide the game immediately was based on the following trick: **36...♙f6!** The game continued: 36...♜bb3? 37.♘g1 (37.♘ac3!?) 37...♜xb5 Black was winning, but misplayed his advantage. The game was drawn on move 114 and Paragua was eliminated. **37.♜h6** 37.♜f2 ♜xh3† 38.♙g1 ♙h4!–+ is an important point. White cannot defend the b6–g1 diagonal. **37...♙g5!!** (2 points) A standard deflection, but devilishly hard to see. White is just lost. **38.♜xg5 ♜xh3†** **39.♙g1 d3†** **40.♘d4 ♜xd4!!** (1 point) Very likely this is what Paragua missed. The capture with the queen immediately leads to a perpetual, as the rook cannot join the attack. 40...♜xd4† 41.♜f2 ♜xb2 42.♜xg6†= **41.♜f2 ♜g4–+ g2 falls and White collapses.**

26. De la Riva Aguado – Caruana, Dresden (ol) 2008

White needs to defend himself against mate in one, but he also needs to keep his counterplay alive. This can only be done in one way: **23.♜d5!!** (3 points) In the game White lost rapidly after 23.♜d4? a4 24.♘c5 and resigns without waiting for the obvious reply. Black also wins after 24.♜b4 ♜a3†! 25.♙d1 ♜d8, where White cannot save the queen with ♜b8, as he would have been able to had Black given the check on b2. **23...♜b2†** Black is lost no matter what, but this makes most sense. 23...a4 24.♙c5 and 23...exd5 24.♙c5 ♘d3† 25.cxd3 ♜b2† 26.♙d1 c2† 27.♙e2 c1=♜† 28.♙f1 both show the power of the white threat. **24.♙d1 ♜b1†** **25.♘c1 ♜b7** **26.♜xe5! fxe5** 26...♜d8 27.♜xd8† ♙xd8 28.♜xa5 should win with best play. **27.♜xe5 ♜d8†** **28.♙e2** White is winning in this very complex and difficult position.

27. Vachier-Lagrave – Pelletier, Biel 2011

23.♜xe6! (1 point) Not a difficult first move. But as we shall see, it is hard enough to see the winning line even if you are up close and personal. **23...fxe6** **24.♜g6† ♙h8** **25.♜xh6† ♙g8** **26.♜g6† ♙h8** **27.♜e4!** Forcing a clearance of the 6th rank. **27...f5** **28.♜h6† ♙g8** **29.♜xe6 ♜d7** The only defensive try. **30.♜g6† ♙f7** This position was probably already in Vachier-Lagrave's mind when he took on e6. But he did not solve the last remaining problem then, nor did he manage it once he reached the position over the board. **31.♜xc6?** A horrible move. 31.♜h5! wins easily. Black's best loses the queen for the rook. And after 31...♙e7 32.♜e2†! (3 points) mate is very near. To call this a candidate move might surprise some, but really this is what it is. After eight forced moves, we have reached the point where White needs to find something slightly tricky. The technique of candidate moves comes in handy then. 31.d5 also wins, but only because of 31...cxd5 32.♜h5!, so this is a computer addition. White has to find this point. **31...♙e8** **32.d5 ♜e7** **33.c4= f4** **34.♜h5† ♜f7** **35.♙g2 f3†** **36.♙h3 ♜d7†** **37.g4 ♙d8** **38.♜g5 ♜g7!!** **38...♜e8!=** **39.♜f4± ♙e8** **40.♙g3 ♜b7?** **40...♜d8±** **41.♜f5± ♜c7?** **42.♜h6 ♜h7** **43.♜e6† 1–0**

28. Kulaots – Libiszewski, Aix-les-Bains 2011

20.e5! (1 point) A typical move, winning the battle for the dark squares. 20.♖ab1 and 20.♖ad1 were both decent moves with a strong attacking position, but they are not immediately winning. The same is the case with 20.♙xc4 bxc4 21.♖ab1, when Black has to play 21...♙h8 to get the bishop back home. After 22.♜g5! he is forced into 22...♞c7, when he does not have full compensation for the exchange. But the game is not decided yet. **20...♙xa1** Walking the plank, but the bishop had no defensive powers anymore. 20...♙4xe5 21.♙df6† exf6 (21...♙h8 22.♙g7† with mate) 22.♙xf6† ♙h8 23.♙xe8 and White wins with the double threat of ♜f6† and ♙xd6. 20...♙xe5 21.♞xe5 dxe5 22.♙df6† exf6 23.♜xf6 is simply mate. 20...♙6xe5 21.♙xe7† is even simpler, with mate on the next move. 20...♞d8 21.♙xc4 bxc4 also wins easily for White. A few lines are possible, simplest maybe is 22.exd6 with the ideas 22...f5 23.c3! and 22...♜xd6 23.♙xe7†!. **21.♞xa1 ♜d2** 21...♞d8 looks like a better defensive try, but White has a winning attack and intends to execute it in one way or another. Here 22.♙f8!?, 22.♞d1 and 22.e6! all win. The same is the case with 22.♙xc4 dxe5 (22...bxc4 loses to everything. For example: 23.exd6 ♜xd6 24.♙df6† with mate in a few moves.) 23.♙xe7†! ♜xe7 24.♙f6† ♙h8 25.♜h4 and White wins. He is for example threatening ♙f8 and 25...bxc4 can be met with anything: 26.♞e1 ♞c7 27.♙f8 h5 28.♙xe7 ♞xe7 29.♜g5 ♙g7 30.♙xh5† ♙h7 31.♞e4 and the attack has not stopped, but will with the king's fast approaching decapitation. **22.♙xe7†!** Black resigns; 22...♙xe7 23.♜f6 wins the queen. **1–0**

29. Kasimdzhanov – Predojevic, Germany (var) 2007

White has a fantastic breakthrough combination on the queenside based on gaining time. **20.a5!! ♜xb5** 20...♞a6 makes no sense. White plays 21.♙bd6 with the idea b4-b5. **21.♙d4** (1 point) **21...♜g5** 21...♞xb4 loses to 22.♙xc6†! bxc6 23.♜xc6. For example: 23...♙c5 24.♖ab1 **22.♙xc6† ♙c7** And now: **23.♜e4!** (1 point), which is just winning, or 23.♙xd8† ♙xd8 24.♜c7† ♙e7 25.♞d1 ♜f5 26.♖a3 which gives a winning attack. For example, 26...♙ge5 27.♞xd7† ♙xd7 28.♞e3† ♙f6 29.♞f3.

30. Goganov – Khismatullin, Moscow 2012

In the game White missed the reasonably “simple” win with **39.g4!** (1 point), where after **39...fxg4 40.♜xg4** White is winning. For example **40...g6 41.♜d7†** and mate is near. Instead White played 39.♜e6?!, when Black escaped with a draw with: 39...e3! 40.♜f7 exf2† 41.♞xf2 ♙g3 42.♞dd2 ♞xh4 43.♜xf5† ♙h8 44.♜f8† ½–½

TEST 6

31. Nguyen – Vrana, Novy Bor 2012

28.♟f6! In the game 28.♟g5? ♞xc4 29.♞dg1 ♟f7 30.e5 ♞e7 left Black in a winning position, even though the game ended in a draw on move 44. Also no good is: 28.♟g2?! ♞xc4 29.♞dg1 ♟f7! 30.♞g5 ♟f8! 31.♞h6 ♟f7= **28...♟fe8 29.♟f7!** (1 point)

32. Topalov – Rapport, Vienna (clock simul) 2012

A few days before this book went to print I had the chance to play against Topalov in a simul in Scotland. Knowing I was a GM he steered towards the draw from an early stage. However he did not know that Andrew Greet was an IM and thus avoided a perpetual only to drop his queen for nothing! At the end Veselin was clearly tired, blaming this on the clock simul against talented youngsters played the day before in Vienna. **31...♞h4!!** (1 point) **32.gxh4 g3 33.hxg3 fxg3 34.♙e3?!** 34.♙c5 is not met with 34...♙xc5†? 35.♞xc5 ♟f8? 36.♞xd7 ♟f2, although this may look strong. The problem is that Black is not really threatening the queen (rather he is threatening ...♞xh4). White therefore has a fantastic defence: 37.♙h3!! (2 points) 37...♞xh4 38.♞f6!† ♞h8 (38...♞xf6 39.♙f5† ♞h8 40.♞c6 ♞xc6 41.dxc6 ♟xa2 42.♞d8† ♟g8 43.♟xg8† ♞xg8 44.♙e6†+–) 39.♞c6 ♟xf6 40.♞e8† ♟g8 41.♞e5 and wins. Therefore the correct move is 34...g2! 35.♙xg2 ♙h3 36.♟f1 (36.♙xb4 ♟xg2† 37.♞xg2 ♞xd1†+– and 36.♞d3 ♞xh4 both give a winning attack. Here the conclusion could be 37.♙xb4 ♙xg2 38.♟xg2 ♟xg2† 39.♞xg2 ♟g8† with mate to come.) 36...♙xg2 37.♞xg2 ♙xc5† 38.♞xc5 ♟ag8 39.♞h1 ♟xg2 40.♟xg2 ♟xg2 41.♞xg2 ♞e2† 42.♟f2 ♞g4† 43.♞f1 ♞d1† 44.♞g2 ♞g6 Black wins. **34...♟f8!!** (3 points) 34...g2 35.♙xg2 ♙h3† is less strong. **35.♞b3 ♟f2** 35...♞xh4 also wins. **36.♟xf2** 36.♙xf2 gxf2† 37.♞xf2 ♞xh4† is mate in four. **36...gxf2† 37.♞xf2 ♞xh4† 38.♞e2 ♙b5† 39.♞d3** White resigned. It is mate in two. **0–1**

33. Gashimov – Akopian, Astrakhan 2010

White is close to winning if he spots an important idea: **32.♞f6†!** The game ended: 32.♞g1? ♞a7† 33.♞h2 ½–½ 32.♟c7? looks promising until you spot 32...♞h5! and White is even in trouble! 33.♞c2 ♟xd5 34.exd5 ♟xe1 35.d6 ♟e8 36.♞c6 ♞f6† **32...♞h8 33.♞d7!** (2 points) **33...♞f1†** 33...♞f4? is worse. White can now play ♞h2-g1, but even better is: 34.♞d4† ♞g8 35.♞f6† ♞f8 36.♞xh7† ♞g8 37.♞f6† ♞f8 38.♞b4† ♞g7 39.♞xe8† ♟xe8 40.e5+– with full control. **34.♞g1 ♞a7† 35.♞xf1 ♟xd7 36.♞b3** White has serious winning chances with his extra pawn.

34. Dinstuhl – Aagaard, Budapest 1992

This game was very depressing for me. I hated losing back then. But revisiting it now I can see it was a treasure. **18.♞xe5!!** White missed this beautiful move. Instead in the game my opponent went for: 18.♞e7†? ♞h8† 19.♞xe5?! ♞e2† 20.♞h1 ♞xd1† 21.♙f1 ♙xe5 (21...♞g5!) 22.♞xg6† ♞g8 23.♞xe5 and here I could have won with: 23...♞c2! 24.♞xg4 ♞xb2 25.♞xh6† ♞g7 26.♞f5† ♞h8 and White has no compensation. I missed this and later lost the game. **18...♙xe5 19.♟xd4 ♙xd4 20.♞xd4** (3 points) **20...♙f6 21.e5** Black is just busted. Very simple, but not so easy!

35. Gustafsson – Efimenko, Porto Carras 2011

This combination is in many ways straightforward. The beautiful move is the 29th move. **26.♖xf6 ♜xf6 27.♙h7† ♜f8 28.♙g5** (1 point) **28...♞e5!?** Trying to muddle things up, but Jan was prepared. **28...♞e5 29.♙d3** is not too difficult. White wins. **29.♙f5!** (1 point) The threat to the queen persists. **29...g6 30.♞h4 ♜xg5 31.♞xg5 ♙xf5 32.♞h4 1–0**

36. Sreeves – Gupta, London (var) 2010

Had White played the best move on move 14 he would have won. On move 21 he could have set his opponent some serious problems and reached this position. **23...♞xh2†!** **23...♞xd8?!** would leave Black under lasting pressure. A possible line here is: **24.e6 ♙f3 25.e7 ♞e8 26.♞e6 ♙xf2† 27.♜xf2 ♙xc6 28.♞xc6 ♞xh2† 29.♞g2 ♞xg2† 30.♜xg2 ♖b6 31.♜f3± 24.♜xh2 ♞xf2† 25.♜g1 ♞f1 †!** (2 points) A brilliant move. **26.♜g2 26.♜xf1 ♙h3# 26...♞f2†** With a draw.

TEST 7

37. Xu Yuhua – T. Kosintseva, Sochi (blitz) 2009

White missed a special moment. In blitz this is understandable, but most players would also miss this shot in normal practice. Actually it is a case of prophylaxis in action. White does not want to allow any of ... dxd5 , ... e6 and ... d6 . **18. d4!!** (3 points) This move has multiple aggressive functions as well. The direct one is to play e6 and d3 , winning the e5-pawn. White did not get anything special after 18. $\text{e6}!$ dxd5 19. exd5 e7 in the game and eventually lost on move 33. 18. d3 d6 is also nothing special. **18... exf4** 18... d6 19. e6 and Black loses a pawn, after either 19... xf8 20. d6 followed by xd8 or 19... c5 20. xd8 dxd8 21. d3! . **19.e5** c5 **20.exf6** and fxg7 with an almost decisive position advantage.

38. Bu Xiangzhi – Pelletier, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009

22... e8! (2 points) Instead in the game Black was close to lost after 22... ef7?? 23. cxd5 xf2 24. dxe6 , but the game was drawn at move 89. **23.cxd5** 23. xe8 dxe4 and Black wins easily. **23... exd5** 24. xe8 dxe4 25. d5 fxe8 26. xg5 d7 Black wins eventually.

39. Movsesian – Zatonskih, Gibraltar 2012

The game ended: 37... c1=? **38. d6** 38. xc1! xc1 39. d6 was the pristine move order. **38... gxf6** 39. xc1 xc1 39... fxg5 40. xxg5 f7 41. wh5 e7 42. Bg7 d8 43. Bg5 e8 44. Bxc7 also wins comfortably, but gives Black a bit more counterplay on the way. **40. wf7** h8 **41. wh7!!** (1 point) Black resigned. 41... d7 42. d7 **1–0**

The only way to play for Black was therefore: **37... xxg1!!** **38. xc1** c1=? **39. xc1** (2 points) **40. g2** Already we should have made the choice to go in this direction. Once we have realized that any other continuation loses, we give up the search. At this point Black has a difficult choice; to some extent more difficult than the exercise itself. The point of the method of elimination is that we avoid making such difficult choices – or even thinking of them – but instead focus on making the easier choice of not being mated directly! It is possible that other moves work here, but Black should not underestimate his opponent's attacking chances. 40... b3? for example loses to a brilliant combination that itself could have found its way into this book. 41. wf7! (41.f5? would be the wrong move order: 41... Bg1! 42. d3 (42. xxg1 b2 and White needs to give perpetual check asap.) 42... Bc3 43. d4 The white king might look safe on g4, but at the same time White has also based his entire play on delivering mate on the kingside. When this does not exist, he will find himself sold short. 43... Bc7! I give the exclamation marks here rather than further down the line. 44.f6 Bxg4 Eliminating the dangerous knight. 45. d4 g6! 46. wh3 b2 47. wf1 Bc4 48. d3 Bc3 49. d2 Bc2 and we have one of the coolest perpetual checks I have ever seen.) 41... d8 42.f5 exf5 (42... Bg1 43. d3 Bc3 44. d4 and White wins easily. This is not possible if the rook can make it back to c7.) 43. wh5 d8 44. d6 gxf6 45. wf7 d8 46. xf6 d8 47. wf7 d8 48.e6 B1c2 49. d3 B2c3 50. d4 B3c7 51. wf6 d8 52. d7 dxe6 53. xe6 bxa2 54. d6 d7 55. xf5 d7 56. e5 d6 57. dxc8 Bxc8 58. wb2! and White wins. Instead he should play: **40... B1c2** **41. d3** B2c3 **42. d4** B3c7

and Black will probably save the game. White has a strong attacking pose, but he will have to backpedal to stop the b-pawn.

40. Sasikiran – Calistri, Cappelle la Grande 2011

38.♞xf7† In the game White played 38.f5? and the game was drawn on move 52 after a comedy of errors. Black's correct response to this was 38...♙xd5 39.exd5 g5! with chances for both sides. 38...♙xf7 39.♞f3 ♖g8 39...♙e6 40.♞a7† is just mate. 40.♜e7†! Not so easy to see. 40.♞xh3 would allow Black to draw the game after 40...♞d1† 41.♜g2 ♙xd5 42.exd5 ♞xd5†. 40...♜f8 41.♞xh3 (3 points) 41...♞d1† 42.♜g2 ♞c2† 43.♜g3 ♞b3 White is winning after 44.♞f3, which is probably the simplest. But there is also a nice direct win: 44.♞xb3 cxb3 45.♞h8† ♙g8 46.♜xg8! Rook takes also wins, but this is best. 46...♜f7 46...b2 47.♜h6# 47.♜h6† ♜xf6 48.♞xb8 b2 49.♞b7! Black is mated in 13 moves with best play.

41. Edouard – Stewart, Hastings 2011

Black is doing well after 38...♙g1, but he had something even stronger: 38...♙xe5!! (1 point) A desperado. Black will lose the bishop anyway so he sells it at a price. After 38...♜xd6?? 39.♞xc4 dxc4† 40.♜xd4± White won on move 58. 39.fxe5 ♜xd6 40.♞xc4 ♜xc4 Black just wins. For example: 41.♜d4 ♜xe5 42.♜c5† ♜f5 43.♜xd5 ♜g4 and so on.

42. Su.B. Hansen – Baramidze, Germany 2012

Sune was quite disappointed that he did not win this game. On Facebook he talked (to so many “friends” that I consider it public information!) about this being an incorrect choice in terms of style of play. This is in my opinion a bit of a cop-out. Sune has occasionally been 2600 rated and would be so continuously (as well as haven beaten Lev Aronian – see Exercise 25 on page 217) if he had done some tactical training. For this reason we are making sure that he will get a freebie of this book on publication! 21.♞c7! (1 point) This is a fairly direct shot. Black has two bishops in trouble. He cannot move the one on e7 because of ♜xf6† and he cannot save the one on d7 because of ♜xf6† and b2-b3! 21.♜xf6?! ♙xf6 22.♞c7 is a weaker version of the solution, the main line being: 22...♙xe5 23.♞h7† ♜f8 24.dxe5 ♞bc8 25.♞b7± Instead in the game White played 21.♜xf7?! ♜xh5 22.♜xh6† ♜f8! 23.♞h7 ♙f6 24.♜g4 (24.♙g6!? ♜e7 25.♜f7 ♞dc8 26.♞a1→) 24...♙e8 25.♞c7 ♞d7 26.b3 ♞b5 27.♞xd7 ♞xd7 At this point White still had a chance to keep a clear edge with: 28.♞h8† (Sune played 28.♜e5? and lost on move 47.) 28...♜e7 29.♙g6 ♙xg6 30.♞xb8. The main line I have given is quite simple, but basically there are no deviations of importance! 21...g6 22.♜xf6† ♙xf6 23.♞xd7 ♞xd7 24.b3 (1 point) White wins.

TEST 8

43. Portisch – Radulov, Nice (ol) 1974

Black needs to win the piece back, but there is a subtlety or two in the process to pay attention to. 23...♙xg2 24.♜xf7 ♜xf7 25.♞d8† ♞e8 26.♙h6! with ♜g5† coming next gives White a decisive attack. **23...f6?** was played in the game, but lost instantly to: **24.♞e1!!** (1 point) **24...♜xd6** 24...♜f1†!? would be a very optimistic try for a trap. 25.♜xf1! ♜xd6 26.♞xe5 ♜xe5 27.♞e1 and White wins. **25.♙xf4** Black resigned. 25...♞xe1† 26.♞xe1 ♜xf4 27.♞e8† ♜g7 28.♞e7† is mate. **1–0**

The correct move was **23...h6!!** (3 points), which is easy to miss, as it looks as if the pawn is just lost. However, this is not the case. **24.♜c8!** 24.♜xh6? is bad because of 24...♞e2!. Forced is 25.♜e4, which after 25...♞xe4 26.♜xc6 ♙xc6 favours Black in the ending, but White has some chances to hold. **24...hxcg5** Simple play is best. 24...♜xc8? 25.♜xh6 ♞e6 26.♜h5 ♞e5 27.♞a3! would give White a strong attack. **25.♜e7† ♞xe7 26.♜xcg5† ♜g6 27.♞xd5 ♜xcg5 28.♞xcg5† ♜f8** The ending still has to be played, but Black's chances are not really worse.

44. S. Ernst – Karisik, Belgrade 2011

White has various attractive options, but only one that wins in clear cut fashion. **33.♞g7† ♜h8 34.♜g4!!** (1 point) The really beautiful shot. 34.♜h3?! ♞xg7 35.♙xf5 is also strong, but after 35...♜g6!! 36.♙xg6 ♙xg6 White will have a tough time breaking the black defences down. **34...♙h5 35.♙xf5!** Another nice shot, but taking on g8 and then h5 also works of course. **1–0**

45. Bologan – Naiditsch, Yurmala (rapid) 2012

Naiditsch found a nice combination, which Bologan missed even when alerted by the first move! **1...c4!!** (1 point) **2.dxc4?!** Also poor is: 2.♜a1?! cxd3 3.cxd3 ♜b4 4.♙xb4 ♜xb4 5.d4 f6 6.e6 ♞d5 7.♜e4 ♜b5 and White's position is falling apart. 2.♜e4!? was probably best. After 2...c3 3.♙c1 cxb2 4.♙d2 White can soldier on, even if his position is awful. **2...♜c3† 3.♙xc3 ♜f2!!** (2 points) White is losing the queen. **4.♞xd7 ♜xe2 5.♞xd8† ♜xd8** and Black went on to win.

46. Fischer – Larsen, Palma de Mallorca 1970

24...a4!! (1 point) This is a much improved version of the possible 24...e5? 25.♜e6 ♜a7 26.♜g6, when the position is rather complicated. 24...♜c8?! 25.♜g6 a4 also gave Black some initiative, but has nothing on the game. **25.bxa4** 25.♜b1 is not an improvement. Black would be able to break through on the dark squares with 25...a3! 26.bxa3 ♞xa3 27.♜e2 ♜a7 with a deadly attack. **25...e5!** (1 point) 25...♞xa4? 26.♜b3 would allow White to regroup and live to fight another day. **26.♜e6?!** It was slightly more accurate to play 26.♜f5, but here Black can take advantage of the intermediate moves in a better way. 26...b3 (After 26...♙xf5 27.exf5 ♞xa4 the black attack is probably deadly as well, but not immediately decisive.) 27.c3 ♞xa4 28.♜xh6† (The only chance, as after 28.♜g2 ♙xf5 29.exf5 ♜a7 30.♜e2 ♞d4! – not the only move, but it is quite attractive – White is losing in way too many ways to cover any of them seriously.) 28...♜f8 29.♜g6 gxxh6 30.♜xh6† ♜e7 Black has excellent winning chances with his extra piece. White can resist, but it

should be unsuccessful. **26...♖a7!** The attack on the white king is combined with the threat of ...♞e8. In the game Larsen played the most natural move: 26...♞c4!? 27.b3 (27.♞xd6 b3 28.c3 ♞xa4 would also win for Black. The main threat is ...♞a1† and ...♞xg1 followed by ...♞xe6 with an extra piece. 29.♟d2 ♞a2 30.♞b1 also fails to keep the ship afloat. After 30...♞a6 Black wins a piece.) 27...♞xe6 Black has won a piece and went on to win the game on move 52. **27.♞xd6 ♞xe6 28.♞xe6 b3!!** (3 points) This is the key move. Without this Black's attack would not be sufficient. **29.cxb3** 29.♞c6 ♞xa4 30.♞c8† ♞xc8 31.♞xc8† ♟h7 32.♞e6 ♞c7 and Black wins. White can give up his rook on g7, but the checks run out. **29...♞e3† 30.♟b1 ♞d3† 31.♟a2 ♞fa7** Black wins. The threat of ...♞xa4† cannot be averted in a sensible way.

47. Naiditsch – V. Mikhalevski, Heviz 2008

White could have won with: **36.♞xe7** In the game White did not deserve to win. After 36.♞xc2? ♞xc2† 37.♟h3 ♞c8† 38.♟g2 ♞c2† 39.♟h3 ♞c8† 40.♟g2 Black could just give perpetual check, but became greedy and lost after: 40...♞d8?? 41.hxg6 hxg6 42.♟f2! d2 43.♟g4† ♟h5 44.♟e5+– ♞b6 45.♞h7† ♟g5 46.♞xe7† ♟f5 47.♟g4! 1–0, in view of 47...d1=♞ 48.♞e5#. **36...♞xd2† 37.♟g3!** (2 points) The black king is in deep trouble. **37...♞g1†** 37...♞xb2 38.♞f8† just wins. And 37...a5 38.♞f8† ♟xh5 ends with mate after: 39.♟f6† ♟g5 40.♟xh7† ♟h5 41.♟f6† ♟g5 42.♟e4† ♟h5 43.♞h8# **38.♟f4 ♞h2† 39.♟g3** Black is mated despite his extra material.

48. Firman – McShane, Germany 2012

McShane is on his way to becoming England's number one, even though he has a day job! A team with Adams, Short, McShane and Jones, with David Howell as the reserve could do great things, and hopefully will in the near future. Here Luke shows how inventive he is. **55...♞xd1!!** 55...♞g1†!? 56.♟h1! ♞xd1! transposes. **56.h8=♞ ♞g1† 57.♟h1 ♞b6† 58.♟h2 ♞g1† 59.♟h1 ♞f2† 60.♟h2 ♞c7!** (2 points) White resigned, due to the threat of ...♞h1†. **0–1**

TEST 9

49. Markus – Perunovic, Vrnjacka Banja 2010

It is not so difficult to spot Black's intended drawing combination, but it is hard to see that it does not work. 24.♙xb6! ♖c1† 24...♞xb6 25.♞xd5 is not too relevant. White has just won a pawn. 25.♙h2 ♖f4† 26.g3 ♜xg3 This is Black's idea. 26...♞f3 does not prepare ...♜xg3 as one student suggested. Please notice ♙h7† as a reply! 27.♙c7!! (3 points) A brilliant move. White just finishes a piece up. 27...♜f1† 28.♙g2 ♖xc7 29.♞xe6 29.♙xf1? ♖c1† would unnecessarily allow a repetition. 29...♞h2† 30.♙xf1 ♖xh3† 31.♙e1 ♖xe6† 32.♙d2 b6 33.♙e2 ♖e4 34.♖e3 f5 35.♙f3 1–0

50. Smirnov – Timofeev, Belgorod 2010

Black won this game only because his opponent insisted on losing it. The solution should be within the reach of a 2681 grandmaster; but this does not guarantee a 10/10 achievement, of course. And importantly, in this case Black had won the first game of this mini-match, so White had to win this game to remain in the tournament. Under such conditions you can easily look only for draws. 30...axb2!! I have to give this a negative mark, even if it works well with regards to progressing to the fourth round. 30...♞d5? also allows White to draw, this time with 31.♙e5! ♞a7 32.♞h7† ♜f8 33.♞f5†, when the repetition is forced, on account of 33...♞f7? 34.♙xg7† with mate. 30...a2† 31.♙a1 ♙d5 also fails to win the game. White has two ways to draw, either 32.♞h7† ♜f8 33.♙h4! or 32.d7! ♞xd7 33.♞h7† ♜f8 34.♞f5†. 31.♞h7† ♜f8 32.♙e5!? Going all in with no chips. 32.♞f5† ♜g8 33.♞h7† was “best”. 32...♙d5 33.♞f5† ♙f7 34.♙e4 ♞a1† 35.♙xb2 ♞xe1 36.♙xg2 ♞xe5 0–1

But Black could have won the game with 30...♙d5!! (2 points), preparing to defend the king with ...♙f7 and to meet any active move, including 31.d7, with 31...♙a2†! and mate is near.

51. Williams – Genovese, Sunningdale 2010

16.♙xc7! (2 points) In the game Simon completely overlooked the combination and after 16.♞g3 ♜f5 he was worse. He still won the game on move 29 though. 16.♙xf7†? ♞xf7 17.♜xf7 ♙xf7 18.♙xh6± was also strong, but not conclusive. 16.♜xf7 ♙xf7 would still win if White then takes on c7. After 17.♙g3?! ♙xg3 18.♞xf7 ♞xf7 19.♞xg3 Black can generate some counter-chances with 19...♜xd4! 20.♙xf7† ♜xf7 21.♜d6† ♜g8 22.cxd4±, when he is still fighting. 16...♞xc7 17.♙xf7†! Less strong is 17.♜xf7?! ♞xf7 18.♞g3! ♞xg3 19.♜xg3 ♜f8 20.♙xf7 ♙xf7 21.d5 ♜e5 22.b3±, though White is better. 17...♞xf7 18.♞xf7 ♙xf7 19.♜f6†! (1 point) 19...♜f8 19...gxf6 20.♞h7† ♜f8 21.♜e6†! is the first point of the combination. White wins the queen. 20.♜gh7† ♜e7 21.♞e4† ♜d8 22.♞xh4 gxf6 23.♜xf6 White's attack is absolutely decisive. I can understand if some players have a problem feeling this, but all I can say is to study attacking play (I know two very good books on the subject!). 23...♞d6 23...♜e7 24.♜e4 and wins. 24.♞f1 White wins. For example: 24...♙c7 25.♜e4 ♖d5 26.♞f4† ♜b6 27.♜f6 ♖d8 28.d5 ♜a5 29.♞b4† ♜a6 30.♜e4 b6 31.♞xf7 and so on.

52. Inarkiev – Diu, Taganrog 2011

After 37.bxc3?? as played in the game, the chances were about equal. Inarkiev did win the game on move 54, but only after having been worse on the way. At this point he could have won quickly with: 37.♖f6† ♕e8 38.♙f7† ♖d7 39.♙e6†!! (2 points) This is the difficult move, but the bishop is useless on f7 and has to be brought into play. 39.♗e6† ♖c7 40.♗e7† ♖b8! does not offer more than perpetual check. 39...♖c6 40.♙f5†! The nicest winning move (40.♙g4† is similar), but White is also winning after 40.♙d5†!? ♖c5 41.♗e7†! ♖d4 42.♗e4† ♖c5 43.b4†! and the queen is lost. 40...♖c7 40...♖c5 41.♗e5† wins easily. 41.♗e7† ♖c6 42.♗e6† ♖c7 42...♖c5 43.♗e5† and wins. 43.♗d7† ♖b6 44.♗d6#

53. N. Kosintseva – Romanko, Moscow 2009

My secret training method of “the 3 questions” includes: *Where are the weaknesses?* In the black camp these are the d5-pawn and the g7-pawn. In the white camp it is the e2-bishop. Do you start to see the g4-g7/e2 pattern yet? 28.h5!! (4 points) Besides preventing the threat of ...♙g6†, there is the attack on g7. 28.♖f1? would be bad. After 28...♗h2 29.♗xd5 (29.♙f3 ♗h3† and Black wins back the piece immediately.) 29...♗h3† 30.♗g2 ♗xg2† 31.♖xg2 ♗xe2 32.♗xe2 ♗xe2 Black should have enough compensation to draw easily. In the game White played the inferior 28.♗xd5?! ♗xe2 29.♗xe2 ♗xe2 30.♙d2 ♗xd2 31.♗xd2±, but still won on move 78. 28...♗xe2 29.h6! f6 29...gxh6 30.♗xe2 ♗xe2 31.♗g4† is elementary, and 29...f5 30.♗xe2 ♗xe2 31.♗xd5† ♖h8 32.♗xf5 wins quite easily as well. 30.♗xe2 ♗xe2 31.♗xd5† ♖h8 32.♗d8† ♗xd8 33.♗xd8† ♖h7 34.hxg7 ♖xg7 35.♙d7† White wins.

54. Morozevich – Movsesian, Sarajevo (var) 2008

Morozevich showed a brilliant win in this line from his chaotic game with Movsesian: 31.♗c4!! (2 points) A brilliant move, clearing the c1-square for the bishop and at the same time bringing the rook into the attack. Black only has one sensible way to go down: 31...♙xb2 31...bxc4 32.♙c1† ends quickly in mate. 32.♗h4† ♖g7 33.♗g4† ♖f8 34.♗h6†! (1 point) 34...♙g7 35.♗xg7 ♖xg7 36.♗h8# A beautiful combination.

TEST 10

55. Fridman – Harikrishna, Nancy (rapid) 2011

White has a lovely combination here, winning a pawn. What he does not have is a mating combination. In the game White went for an attractive combination, which worked fine in practice: **18. ♖xd5?! exd5 19. hxc6 hxc6 20. ♖xd5?** 20. ♖a2± would still be okay, but White is aiming for glory. **20... ♖xd5 21. ♗e5** Black was now hypnotized by his opponent's great idea and failed to look at the position objectively. This is of course a forgivable mistake in a rapid game, but would not be so if we had it in a real game. **21... ♖c5?** Letting his opponent off the hook. Black could have won the game with 21... ♗h3!! (1 point) 22. ♖e4 (22. ♖xh3 ♖e1† is obvious) 22... ♖a1† 23. ♔d2 ♖xh1 24. ♗xd5 ♗b4†!! 25. ♖xb4 ♗xg2 and wins. **22. ♔d2 ♖b4† 23. ♗c3 ♖xc3† 24. bxc3 ♖d8 25. ♖xf7 ♖xc3† 26. ♖xd8† 1–0**

The solution was **18. hxc6! hxc6 18... ♖xc3?! 19. gxf7† ♖xf7 20. bxc3 ♖xc3† 21. ♖c2** would lead to a win for White. **19. ♗xd5!** (1 point) **19... exd5 19... ♖xd5? 20. ♖xd5! exd5 21. ♗e5** is mate. **20. ♗e5** These are all simple moves. But sometimes this is what it takes. White is now threatening 21. ♖h6 with the point 21... ♗f5 22. ♖dh1!. **20... ♗f5** The other move that does not lose immediately is 20... d4, when White has a nice combination in 21. ♗xd4 ♗f5 (21... ♖xg5 22. ♖e4 ♗f5 23. ♖xg5 ♖fc8† 24. ♔d2 gives White an extra pawn and better positioning of his pieces in the endgame.) 22. ♖ge4 ♔g7 Obviously we would stop here in our calculation – if we had even made it this far. 23. g4! ♗xg4 24. ♖dg1 ♗f5 25. ♖g5! ♖ac8 26. ♖xf6 ♗xf6 27. ♖xf5! ♖xf5 28. ♖xf5 gxf5 29. ♖g1† White wins. **21. ♖xd5!** (2 points) **21... ♖b6 22. ♖a2** White has a winning attack and an extra pawn. Mistakes are still likely to happen from both sides, but it is a good starting point for White!

56. Haznedaroglu – Isaev, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010

Black has many tempting options, but only one that wins on the spot. In the game Black managed to take the full point with nice play after **17... d3?! 18. f3 g3 19. ♖f5?** White missed the chance to offer resistance with 19. ♖e3, although Black is going to be much better after: 19... ♖d5 20. ♖g1 ♖dh5 21. ♖e4 f5 **19... ♔b8 20. ♖c5 20. ♖h3 ♖f4** and Black wins. **20... ♖d4! 21. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 22. ♖e8† ♔a7 0–1**

Black is also much better after 17... ♖h5?! 18. ♖e4 d3 as suggested by Marina Brunello. 19. f4 (19. g3? ♖h1† just wins) 19... ♖g3 20. ♔g1 ♖dh8 21. ♖e8† ♖xe8 22. ♖xe8† ♔d7 23. ♖f1! ♖h4 24. ♖e3 ♖d5± But White can put up a lot of resistance before the game is decided.

The winning line was: **17... ♖h1†! 18. ♔e2 ♖de8!** (1 point) Very simple, but many find this hard to see. Black wins a rook back and nobody has a problem seeing that his first rank domination is decisive.

57. Grischuk – Aronian, Ohrid 2009

Grischuk found himself caught up in a nasty piece of home preparation and now had to look for a way out. In such a situation the method of elimination comes in handy. **26. ♗e5? ♗d6!!** (3 points) This is the direct refutation. **27. ♗xf6 27. ♖c5† ♗xc5 28. ♖xg8 ♖h6 29. dxc5 ♖d2** and Black wins.

27...♖xa8 28.♟f1 28.♟xd6 ♖a1† 29.♟h2 ♟xd6 wins easily as well. The white pawns are all targets. **28...♖a1† 29.♟e2 ♖a2†** Grischuk resigned. **0–1**

26.d5? is quite easily refuted with 26...exd5 27.exd5 ♗d6! and White is left stunned and forced to resign.

26.♟a5 is quite easy to get rid of, at least as an equalizing option. After 26...♞xd4! (1 point) White can play his idea 27.♗d8† ♟xd8 28.♟xc6† ♟d7 29.♟xd4, but after 29...♗d6† his position is just unpleasant. For example: 30.e5 ♗c5 (30...♗e7 31.♗e4! ♟c7 32.♟f1 ♗d8 33.♟c2 ♗d1† 34.♟e2 ♗d2† 35.♟f1=) 31.♟c2 ♖a8 with the direct threat ...♖a3. Still White can fight on with 32.♟e1! ♖a2 33.♟f1 ♟c6† Progress is difficult for Black, but White's position is unpleasant.

26.♖a7?! ♞xd4 27.♟c5† ♟e8 28.♖a8† ♞d8 29.♖xd8† ♟xd8 30.♟a4† is also unpleasant for White. Compared to 26.♟a5, he has a pawn less. So this can easily be dismissed.

The solution was therefore: **26.e5! ♞h6 27.♖a7!** (4 points) 27.♟a5? is refuted by bringing out the bishop. For example: 27...♗c5! 28.♖xg8 ♞d2 29.dxc5 ♞xd3 and the c-pawn will draw blood. **27...♞c1† 27...♟c7 28.♟a5† ♟b6 29.♖a6†!** with a draw. **28.♟h2 c2 29.♟a5†** with perpetual check after **29...♟e8**.

58. Marholev – Rotstein, Livigno 2011

29.♞h1!! (1 point) Threatening mate in two and forcing Black to advance the h-pawn, making it impossible for Black to defend the h6-square with the queen. 29.♞c1 does not work. Black can play 29...♞h2! (1 point) 30.♖fxg7 ♗xg6 with approximately even chances. **29...h5** 29...♞e3 should of course be considered. White wins after 30.♖f3 ♞d2 31.♖f2! ♞e3 32.♖e2 ♞f4 and now simply 33.g3 or the accurate 33.♟xd5! exd5 34.g3 ♞f5 35.♖xh6† ♗xh6 36.♞xh6† ♞h7 37.♞f6† and it is time to resign. **30.♞c1!!** (1 point) Black resigned. For example: 30...♗xf7 31.♖h6† ♗xh6 32.♞xh6# **1–0**

59. Dzagnidze – E. Danielian, Mardin (2.13 – analysis) 2011

This arose in my analysis of the game. White is able to bring the last piece in quickly, using the pin on the 7th rank one last time before the g7-rook disappears. **25.♖f6!!** (1 point) Black survives after 25.♗xh6?! ♞d6! 26.♟h1 ♞xh6 27.♖xd7 ♞e3 28.♞e6 ♖g1† 29.♖xg1 ♞f3† with perpetual check. And 25.♞e6? ♖xg7 26.♞xh6† ♖h7 just fails outright. **25...♖xg7** Black is quickly mated after 25...hxg5 26.♖xg8† ♖xg8 27.♖h6† ♟g7 28.♞e6!, which can be a bit difficult to see, but is none the less the case. **26.♖xh6† ♖h7 27.♖xh7† ♟xh7 28.♞f7† ♟h8 29.♗f6†** (1 point) **29...♟xf6 30.♞xc7** White wins.

60. Jobava – Wojtaszek, Khanty-Mansiysk (2.1) 2011

Black missed a great shot and a chance to take the lead in this mini-match with: **27...♟xf1!** The game ended: 27...♟xg7? 28.♖g3† ♟f8 29.♞f4! ♟xf1 30.♞h6† ♟e7 31.♖g7 ♟e3 32.♖xf7† ♟xf7 33.♞h7† ♟f8 34.♞h6† ♟f7 35.♞h7† ♟f8 36.♞h6† ♟f7 and a draw was agreed. **28.♟xe8** The only difference after 28.♟xh5 ♖c1! is that Black has a rook more. **28...♖c1!!** (1 point) This is the trick shot. The f6-square is indirectly defended. **29.♟xf6† ♞xf6! 29...♟f8? 30.♞g5!+– 30.♞xf6 ♟g3† 31.♟f2 ♟e4†** (2 points) Black wins.

Scores

The following evaluation of your performance is entirely random and meant to boost your ego if possible or squash it if deserved. It is my intention to create a page on [*www.qualitychess.co.uk*](http://www.qualitychess.co.uk) where you can enter your result and rating so that over time we can get a better evaluation. If you are among the first people to go through the book, this will not be up yet, but send me an e-mail with your rating and points and I will keep it for when we do.

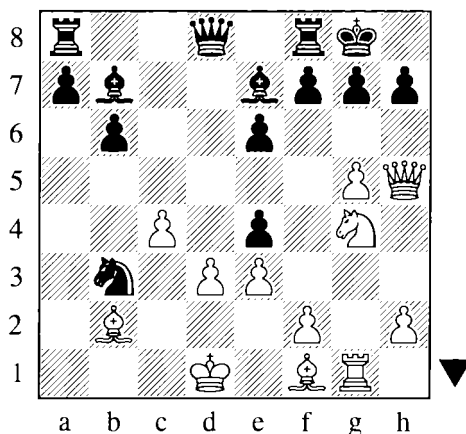
0-25 points	Estimated as up to 2000 performance
25-50 points	Estimated as up to 2300 performance
50-75 points	Estimated as up to 2400 performance
76-100 points	Estimated as up to 2500 performance
101-125 points	Estimated as up to 2600 performance
126-149 points	Estimated as up to 2800 performance
150 points	Estimated as cheating

Chapter 10

Difficult Positions

Manuel Bosboom – Daniel Fridman

Gibraltar 2012

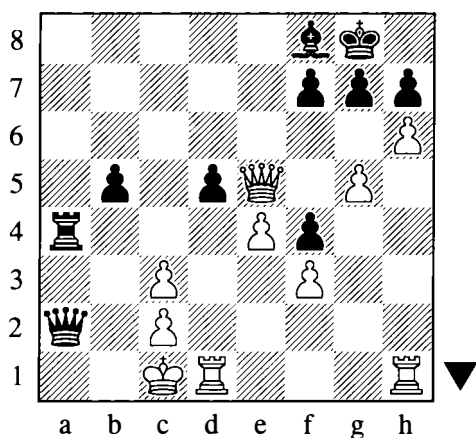


Black has to make a significant choice in this position. He can either play 17...exd3, anticipating White's violent response with calm, or he can throw in 17...e5 18.♙xe5 before playing 18...exd3, as he did in the game. Which of the two choices is the right one? As you can probably guess, the suggested method is comparison.

Welcome to the other side. I hope you enjoyed the tests and did better than you expected. All's well that ends well, and some things like torture are good as long as they end! But in your case the torture is only about to begin. In the following section I have included 75 positions of great difficulty. They include a lot of twists and turns, culminating in the last one, which may not even be humanly possible to calculate to the end. To give you a feeling of what to expect I have selected two examples, the first illustrating the easier positions, the second the harder ones.

Sergey Karjakin – Bu Xiangzhi

Russia 2008



The white king is quite exposed and Black needs to find the right way to include all of his pieces in the attack. This is done by making more out of the pawns, as is so often the case.

33...d4!

Instead 33...♖a3† 34.♔d2 d4 35.♕e2 ♜xc3 36.♜xf4∞ would allow the white king to escape to safety.

34.♕d2!

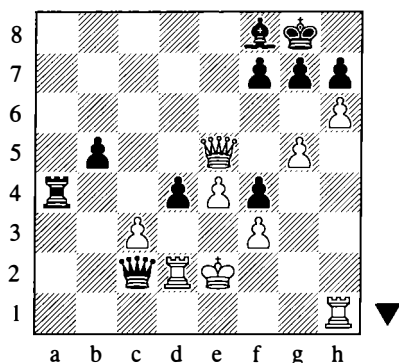
White has no alternatives to this strong defensive move, as he would either lose a rook

or be mated after 34.cxd4 ♜a3†. Already this is not so easy to see when calculating in advance.

34...♜b2 35.♜xf4!

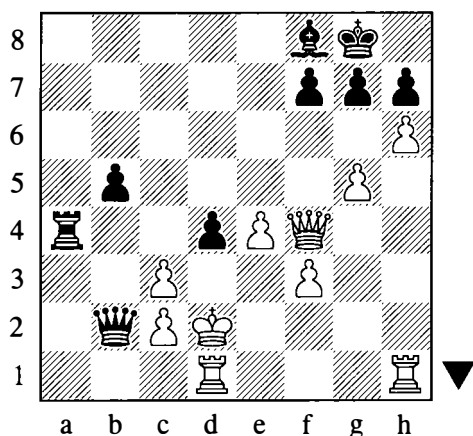
The toughest defence, and again not easy to see.

In the game White collapsed and lost after 35.♕e2? ♜xc2† 36.♜d2



36...d3†!, when mate follows.

35.♜c7 ♜c4! 36.♜xf4 is no defence. Black wins according to his taste with either 36...♜d6 37.e5 ♜xe5! or 36...♜xc3 37.♜c1 d3!.

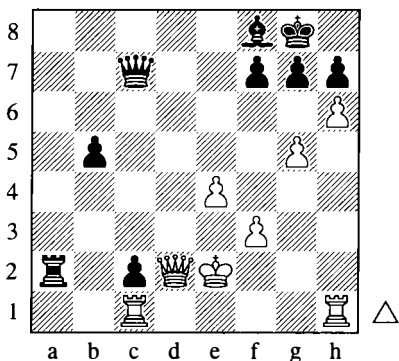


35...♜d6!?

This is the really difficult decision to make. Bu got it wrong in his annotations, even though he would have checked the game with

a computer. Still I think it is entirely possible for a human to solve this.

35...♖a2? 36♞c1 ♞xc3† 37.♔d1 d3 38.♞d2 dxc2† 39.♔e2 ♞c7 is given by Bu as winning, but White has a great resource here:

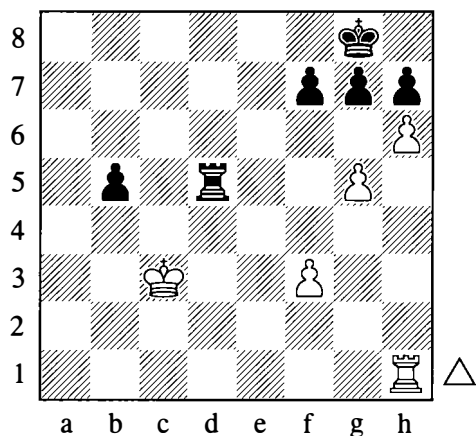


40.♞d5! ♖a3 (40...♖a6 41.hxg7 ♔xg7 42.♞xb5∞) 41.e5! g6 42.e6 fxe6 43.♞xe6† ♔h8 44.♞f6† with a draw.

36.e5

The alternative is: 36.♞xd6 ♞xc3† 37.♔e2 ♞e3† 38.♔f1 ♞xf3† 39.♔e1 ♞xh1† 40.♔f2 ♞h4† 41.♞g3 ♞xg3† 42.♔xg3 ♞c4 43.♖a1 gxh6 44.gxh6 ♔f8 45.♖a2 ♔e7 Black has a pawn more in the rook ending with serious winning chances.

36...dxc3† 37.♔e1 ♞xf4 38.exd6 ♞xc2 39.d7 ♞xd1† 40.♔xd1 ♞d4† 41.♔c2 ♞xd7 42.♔xc3 ♞d5†



43.♖a1 gxh6 44.gxh6 f6 45.♖a7 ♞h5 46.♔d4 ♞xh6 47.f4

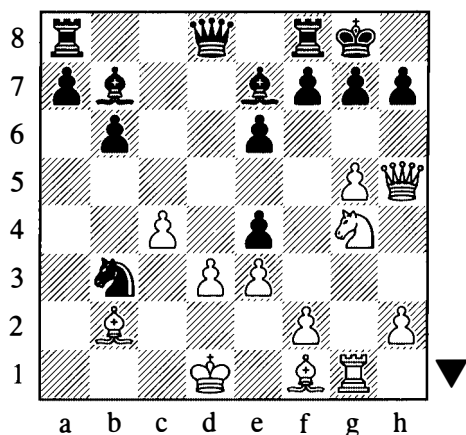
Can White hold this ending? It looks difficult.

Yes, this was meant to be one of the easier positions! As you can probably guess, I would expect you to take anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour-and-a-half trying to make sense of these positions. If things go as planned and your abilities improve along the way, it is my hope that you will be able to solve the ridiculously difficult positions at the end, not a lot slower than the “easier” positions in the beginning.

But first of all, you are probably curious to find out whether or not Black should have thrown in 17...e5 before taking on d3 in the introductory position. Before we can understand the difference, we need to work out the main line.

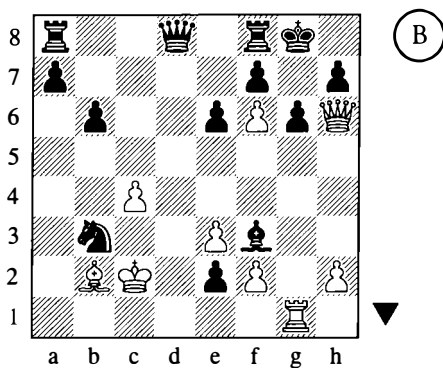
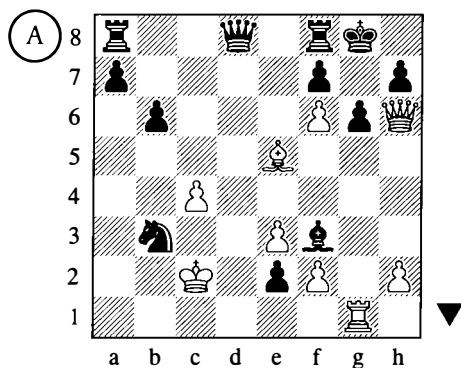
Manuel Bosboom – Daniel Fridman

Gibraltar 2012



It makes sense to calculate this position only once and then throw in ...e5 and ♞xe5 whenever we like.

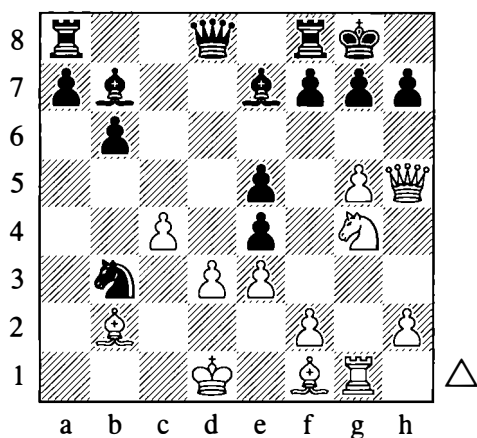
The main line is: 17...exd3 18.♟f6† ♞xf6 19.gxf6 g6 20.♞h6 ♟f3† 21.♟e2 dxe2† 22.♜c2 Forget the fact that you need to understand quite a lot of things before you can get here; that is all part of the challenge (or torture if you like). Let us instead look at the position with and without the insertion of the moves ...e6-e5 and ♟xe5:



I am sure that even looking at these two positions like this, rather than trying to make sense of them in your head, will offer you a challenge. But there you go – spot the difference!

In the game Fridman played:

17...e5

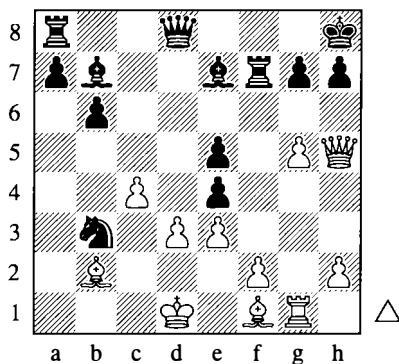


18.♟xe5

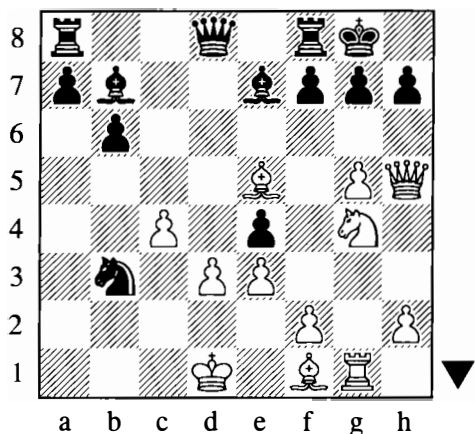
The fact that 18.♟h6†?! draws after

18...gxh6?! 19.♟xe5 hgx5 20.♞h6 f6 21.♞xg5† ♜f7 22.♞g7† ♜e8 23.♞h5† ♜d7 24.♞f5† ♜c6 25.♟g3 ♟c8 26.♞b5† ♜b7 27.♞xe7† ♞xe7 28.♞d5† is both “not human” and irrelevant.

Black has a stronger possibility in 18...♜h8! 19.♟xf7† ♞xf7



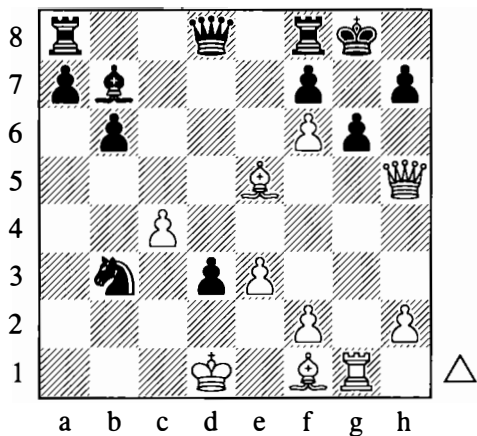
20.g6 (20.♞xf7? ♞d6 with full control) 20...h6 21.gxf7 ♟f6 gives Black the advantage. For example: 22.♞g6 ♞f8 23.♟xe5 ♟xe5 24.♞e6 ♟c8 25.♞xe5 ♟d7 26.♟g2 ♜c5 and White is struggling to make his compensation count.

**18...exd3**

Now there are no choices. 18...♙xg5?
 19.♘h6†! ♚h8 20.♘xf7† ♜xf7 21.♝xf7 ♝f8
 22.♙xb7+–

19.♘f6†

19.♝h6? ♙f3† 20.♙e2 ♙xe2† 21.♚e1 ♙b4†
 22.♙c3 ♙xc3#

19...♙xf6 20.gxf6 g6**21.♜g3??**

Nothing less than an outright blunder. No doubt Bosboom was convinced he was winning due to the prevention of the bishop check, but he soon got a cold shower.

The correct move was therefore the only sensible alternative:

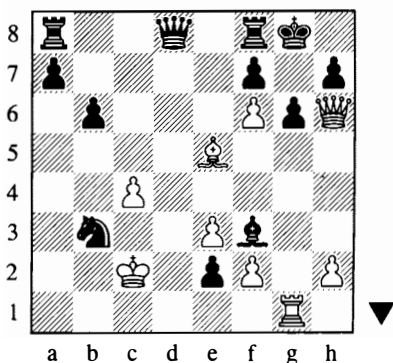
21.♝h6!

Now the game should end in perpetual check.

21...♙f3† 22.♙e2 dxe2†

22...♙xe2†? 23.♚e1 is just winning for White.

23.♚c2



Here Black can and must force a draw with 23...♝d2† 24.♚xb3 ♝d1=.

The other attempt even loses:

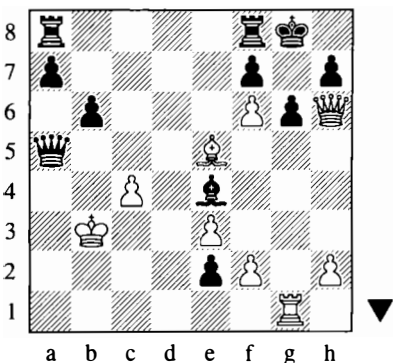
23...♙e4†? 24.♚b2!!

24.♚xb3 is good enough for a draw, but the White king is dancing away.

24...♝d2† 25.♚a3 ♝a5†

Finally it is time to take the knight, and now it is a pleasure as well.

26.♚xb3

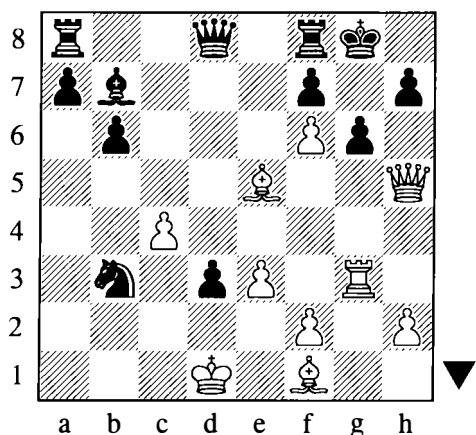


Black has run out of sensible checks and will have to assist the white king in going in the opposite direction.

26...♙c2† 27.♚xc2 ♝a2† 28.♚d3 ♜ad8†

29.♔e4! ♚c2† 30.♕f3 ♚f5† 31.♕g2+–

There are no sensible checks left.



21...♕f3†!

A nice but rather simple tactical blow, ruining White's coordination. Now Black comes first with his counterattack.

22.♚xf3 ♚d7 23.♚f4

23.♚h5 ♕c5 24.♚h6 ♚a4† and Black wins.

23...♕c5 24.♕h3 ♚a4† 25.♔e1 d2†

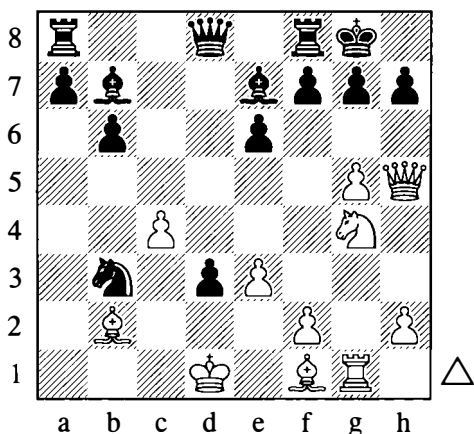
26.♕xd2 ♚a2† 27.♕d1 ♚ad8† 28.♕d4 ♚fe8

29.♕f5 ♕b3

0–1

By this point it is probably no surprise to you that the correct choice was:

17...exd3!

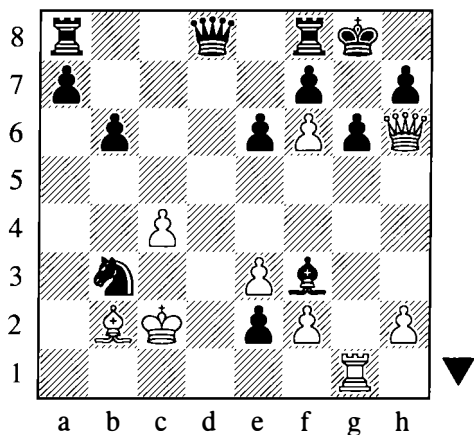


Black refuses to give White a chance to vacate the b2-square for his king. Compared with the note to White's 21st move in the main game, this one detail makes the difference between winning and losing (or at least having to settle for a draw).

18.♕f6† ♕xf6 19.gxf6 g6 20.♚h6 ♕f3†
21.♕e2!

As forced as ever.

21...dxe2† 22.♔c2



This time around the white king does not have the b2-square available, and he is brutally hunted down on the light squares.

22...♕e4†! 23.♕xb3 ♚d3† 24.♕a2

24.♕c3 ♚c2†+–

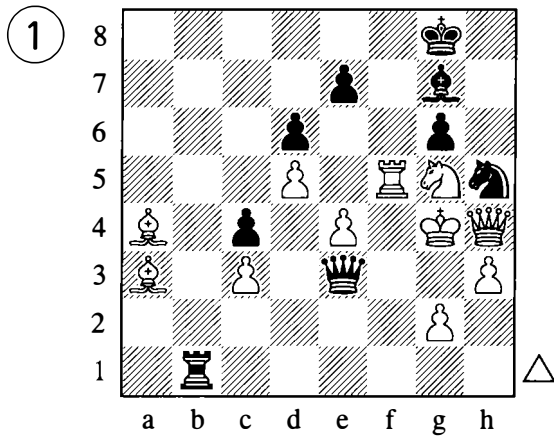
24...♚xc4† 25.♕a3 ♚d3† 26.♕a2 ♕d5†

27.♕a1 ♚d1† 28.♕c1 ♚a4† 29.♕b2 ♚b3†

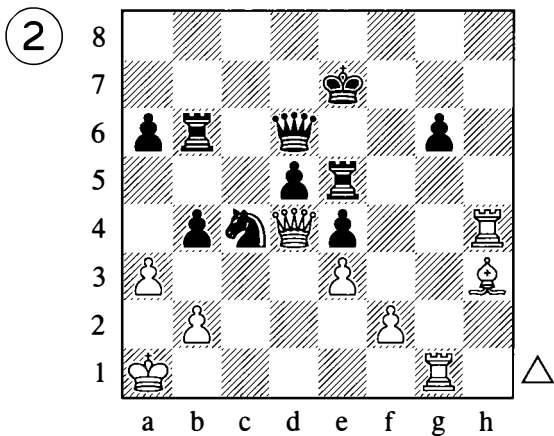
30.♕a1 ♚a2#

Determination is the only thing that can carry you through the next 75 positions. But at the end of it you will be a changed man and ready for anything. You might even have improved your calculation!

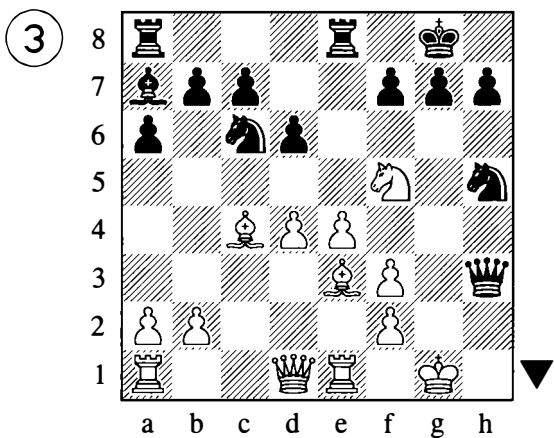
C. Jimenez – A. Quintana, *Elimination*



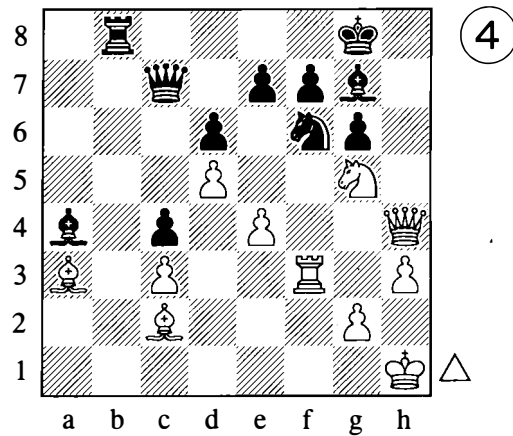
Shyam – Soumya, *Intermediate Move*



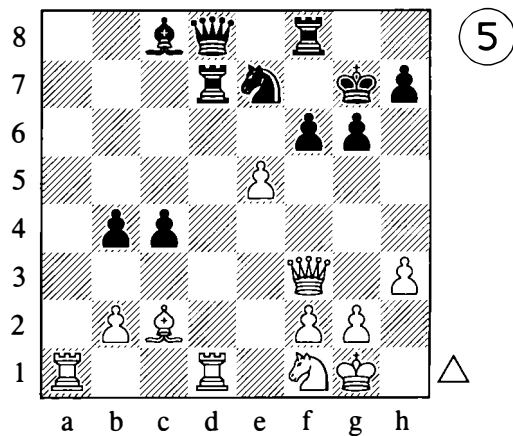
Efimenko – Husari, *Combinational Vision*



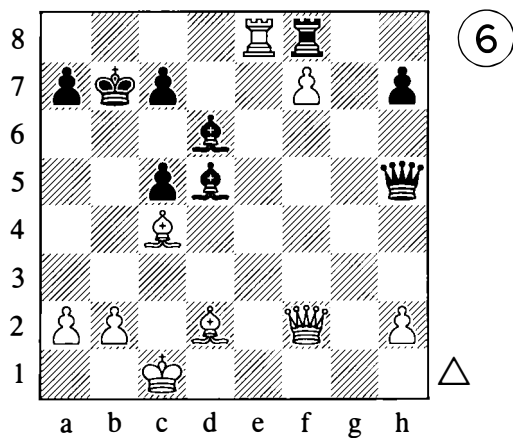
C. Jimenez – A. Quintana, *Combinational Vision*



Timofeev – Svidler, *Candidate Moves*



Aagaard – Su.B. Hansen, *Comparison*



1. Corrales Jimenez – Almeida Quintana, Havana (var) 2012

I found this position in the analysis of this game in *Chess Informant*. The analysis seems to have been performed in a bit of a rush (maybe an impending deadline; magazines do have a tendency to struggle with those) and a mistake had crept in. **32.♖f2!** 32.♖f3? is met with a strong move, which on its own is enough to frighten us: 32...♖f1!! However, it takes quite a bit of calculation to make it clear that White is in trouble. 33.♖xf1 ♖e2† 34.♖f3 ♖xg2† 35.♖g3 ♖e2† 36.♖f3 ♖xc3! 37.♖f2 (37.e5 is refuted beautifully with 37...♖g2† 38.♖g3 ♖f2 39.♖f3 ♖xe5 40.♖c1 ♖f6† 41.♖g5 ♖xg3 42.♖h6 ♖xf3 43.♖xg6† ♖h8 and Black wins.) 37...♖f6† 38.♖g3 ♖e1 39.♖c1 ♖xf2† 40.♖xf2 ♖d3† 41.♖h2 ♖xe4 With a close to winning position for Black. If 32.♖d7? then 32...♖e2† 33.♖f3 ♖xc3! is the easiest way to kill off this line. Next comes ...♖f6† and a bishop check from the back. **32...gxf5† 33.♖xf5 ♖f4†!** A clever idea, but White can refute it. **34.♖xh5!** After 34.♖xf4? ♖xf4 35.♖xf4 ♖xc3 36.♖f3 ♖a1 37.♖b5 ♖xa3 38.♖xc4 White only makes a draw. **34...♖xf5 35.exf5 ♖xc3** 35...♖a1?! was the main line given in *CI*, but here White has an obvious improvement on Velickovic's suggestion of playing the bishop to d7: 36.♖xd6! exd6 37.♖b5 ♖xc3 38.♖g6 and White should win the ending. **36.♖g6 ♖b2** 36...♖a1 37.♖xd6! exd6 38.♖b5 and White wins. **37.♖c2 ♖c1 38.♖xb2 ♖xc2 39.f6 exf6 40.♖xf6** White wins. The h-pawn is very strong. The only way to make the game go on a bit longer is: **40...♖f2** A simple trap. **41.♖e4** 41.h4? ♖xf6†! and the tables turn. **41...♖xg2† 42.♖g5 ♖e2 43.♖f5 ♖b2 44.h4** White wins.

2. Shyam – Soumya, New Delhi 2010

37.♖h7†! Instead **37.f4?!** would have been inferior. After 37...exf3 38.♖h7† Black can offer some defence with: 38...♖e8! when 39.♖d7†?! does not work now. After 39...♖d8 40.♖a4 (40.b3? f2 41.♖f1 ♖f6→) 40...f2 41.♖f1 ♖e7 the position is unclear. Best is 39.♖f4 ♖f6 40.♖xg6 ♖xf4 41.♖g8† ♖f8 42.♖d7† ♖d8 43.♖xf8† ♖c7 44.axb4± and White has winning chances, but no guarantees. 37.b3? ♖xa3 38.♖h7† ♖f8! 39.♖c1 ♖c6 40.♖xc6 ♖xc6 leaves White with nothing better than 41.♖xb4† ♖g8 42.♖h8†! ♖xh8 43.♖f8† ♖h7 44.♖f7† ♖h6 45.♖f8† with a perpetual check. Now back to the game: 37...♖f8 37...♖e8 is this time refuted in no less than two ways. 38.b3! ♖xa3 39.♖xg6! (or 39.♖c1!) 39...♖c2† 40.♖b2 ♖xd4 41.♖g8† ♖f8 42.♖d7† and White wins everything. Or 38.♖d7† ♖d8 (38...♖f8 39.f4! exf3 40.♖f4† with a check on h6 and mate coming) 39.♖a4! and White is winning. For example, 39...bxa3 40.b3! and 39...♖e7 40.♖h8† ♖c7 41.♖xg6! and White wins. **38.f4! bxa3** 38...exf3 39.♖f4† ♖f6 40.♖h6† ♖e8 41.♖xg6 also wins for White. Black's only practical try is 41...♖g5!?, but White wins easily with 42.♖d7† ♖d8 43.♖xg5, when the queen is pinned. **39.fxe5 axb2† 40.♖xb2 ♖c5 41.♖f2† 1–0**

3. Efimenko – Husari, Al-Ain (var) 2008

Black could return the knight to f6 with a small advantage, but he has a much stronger option: **18...♖e6!!** Getting the f8-rook into play along the f-file. **19.♖xe6 fxe6 20.♖b3** The critical reaction. White has no way to defend his position. An example is 20.♖c1 ♖f8 21.♖xc6 bxc6 22.♖b3 d5! and the attack will continue with unrestrained force. **20...♖xd4!** What else was supposed to be the idea? **21.♖xd4 ♖xd4 22.♖ad1** I am sure most humans would play this move, even if the computer sees 20% less mortality in the wasteland that is his position with other moves. 22.♖xd4 ♖f4 leads quickly to mate. **22...♖f8!** Other moves also work: 22...♖xe3 23.♖xe3 ♖f8 24.f4 ♖g4† also wins. Most elegantly with 25.♖f1 ♖xf4 26.♖g3 ♖h3!. **23.♖xd4 ♖g3! 24.fxg3 ♖xg3† 25.♖h1 ♖xf3† 26.♖h2** 26.♖g1 ♖f6 and ...♖g6† is just over. **27.♖g5 ♖f2† 26...♖h5† 27.♖g2 ♖g4† 28.♖h1 ♖f3** Black wins.

4. Corrales Jimenez – Almeida Quintana, Havana 2012

27.e5! The game went differently: 27.♔xa4? ♖b1† 28.♕h2 ♜b6 29.♕g3 ♖a1? (After the preferable 29...♕h5† 30.♕g4 f5†! [30...♖g1 31.♜f2 is about equal] 31.♜xf5 ♜e3 the position can be found in the method of elimination.) 30.♙e8! ♕h5† 31.♕g4 ♕f6† 32.♜xf6 exf6 33.♙xf7† ♕f8 34.♜h7 1–0. **27...♕h5** The serious defence. 27...dxe5? 28.♜xf6 is just mate. 27...♙xc2 loses the queen after 28.♜xf6 exf6 29.♜h7† ♕f8 30.exf6 (or 28.exf6 and 30.♜xf6) 30...♖b1† (30...♙xf6 31.♙xd6† is even more decisive.) 31.♕h2 ♙xf6 32.♕e6†. **28.e6 f5** 28...♙xc2 29.exf7† ♕h8 30.g4 ♙d1 31.♜f1! gives White a winning attack as well. 31...♙e2 32.gxh5 ♙xh5 33.♕e6 ♜b7 34.♜g5 White is in control and about to promote the f-pawn. **29.♙xf5 ♙e8 30.♕f7!** The point of the combination. Without this White only has 30.♙e4 ♖a8 31.g4 ♖xa3 32.gxh5 ♖a1† 33.♕g2 ♖a2†, which would allow Black to escape with a draw. **30...gxh5 31.♜xh5 ♜a7 32.♜xf5** White has a winning attack. **32...♜xa3 33.♕g5 ♜c1† 34.♜f1 ♙g6!** The last trick. But White has a counter-desperado. **35.♜f7†! ♙xf7 36.exf7† ♕h8 37.♜xc1 ♖f8 38.♜f1 ♙f6 39.♕e6 ♖xf7 40.♖f4** White wins with his two extra pawns.

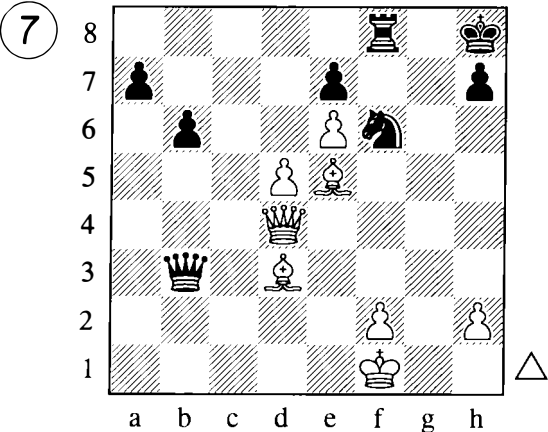
5. Timofeev – Svidler, Moscow 2011

White missed his big moment to impress. **28.♖a7!!** Instead White played: 28.♕e3? b3 29.♙e4 (29.♜xd7 ♜xd7 30.♙d1±) 29...♜c7 (29...f5!?) 30.♜dc1?! (30.♜xd7 ♙xd7 31.exf6† ♜xf6 32.♜d1 ♖d6 33.♜c1±) 30...♖d4 31.♜g3? f5!–+ 32.♙f3 f4 33.♜h4 h6! 34.♕g4 ♕f5 **28...♜xd1** 28...b3 29.♙xb3 cxb3 30.♜axd7 ♙xd7 31.♜b7 leads to a winning ending as well: 31...♙c8 32.♜xd8 ♙xb7 33.♜d7 fxe5 34.♜xb7 ♕f6 35.♜xb3+– Some technical issues remain, but White should win. 28...♖xa7 29.♜xd8 ♖xd8 30.exf6†+– **29.♜xd1 b3** The only try. **30.exf6†!** A very important point. 30.♜xd8? ♖xd8 31.♙xb3 cxb3 32.♜xe7† is close to winning according to the computer, but my analysis indicates that the weakness of the b2-pawn gives Black enough counterplay to draw. 32...♕f8 33.♜xh7 ♙e6 34.♖h8† ♙g8 35.exf6 ♙d1 36.g4 ♖b1 37.g5 ♖xb2 Even if White has a study-like win here, it is terribly impractical to end up having to find it. **30...♕xf6 31.♜f3† ♕g7 32.♜c3† ♕f7 32...♖f6 33.♙e4+–** Despite the equal material, it is obvious that Black is toast. **33.♜xc4† ♙e6 34.♜f4† ♕g8 35.♜e3 bxc2 36.♜xe6† ♕h8 37.♜e5† ♕g8 38.♜c5 ♙d1 39.♜c4†!** White is winning. Either after 39...♕d5 40.♜c7+–, or: **39...♕h8 40.♜c3† ♕g8 41.♜xe7 ♖f7 42.♖e8† ♖f8 43.♜b3† ♕g7 44.♖e7† ♕f6 45.♜e6† ♕g5 46.♜e3† ♖f4 47.h4† ♕g4 48.♜h3† ♕h5 49.♜xh7#**

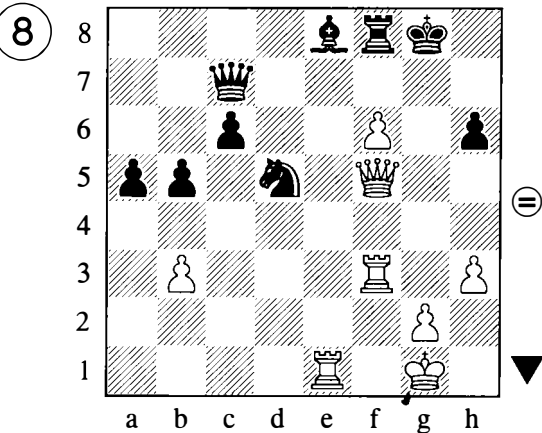
6. Aagaard – Su.B. Hansen, Helsingor 2012

If anything this position is comparison. I did not take in that the queen would be better at c4 than e2, nor did I try to understand that this was the difference. The winning move was in my thoughts, but only very briefly. **30.♜f1!!** The game ended in a draw after 30.♙xd5†? ♜xd5 31.♜e2 a6 32.♜xf8 ♙xf8 33.♜e8 ♜c4† 34.♙c3 ♜f4† 35.♙d2 ½–½ **30...♙c6** 30...♙xc4 31.♜xc4 a6 32.♜b3† ♕c6 33.♜a4† ♕b7 34.♜e4† followed by an exchange on f8 and ♜e8. This time the bishop cannot be defended. 30...♕b6 31.♜xf8 ♙xf8 32.♜f6†! and White wins on account of 32...♙c6 33.♜d8! winning a piece. 30...c6 31.♙a6† ♕b6 32.♙c8! leads to a winning attack. For example: 32...c4 33.♜f2† c5 34.♜f6! **31.♙a6† ♕b6 32.♜xf8 32.♙c8? ♙b5!** 33.♜g2 ♙c6= **32...♙xf8 33.♙c8 ♙b5** White wins trivially after 33...c4, for example: 34.♜xc4 ♜c5 35.♜xc5† ♕xc5 36.a3! and White ends up with an extra piece. **34.♜f6†! ♙c6 35.♜c3!! ♙b5 36.♜a5† 36.a4!** also wins. **36...♕c6 37.♙b7†! ♕xb7 38.♜xb5†** and White wins.

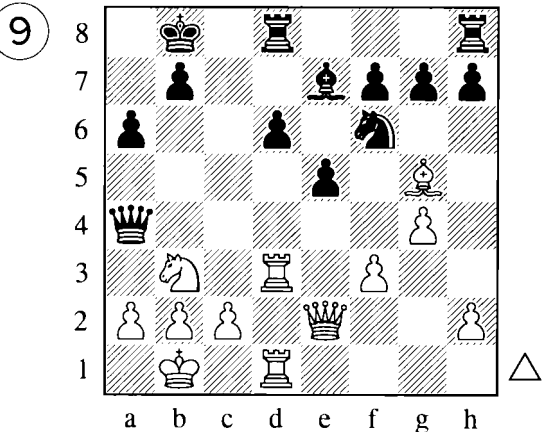
Caruana – Areshchenko, *Prophylaxis*



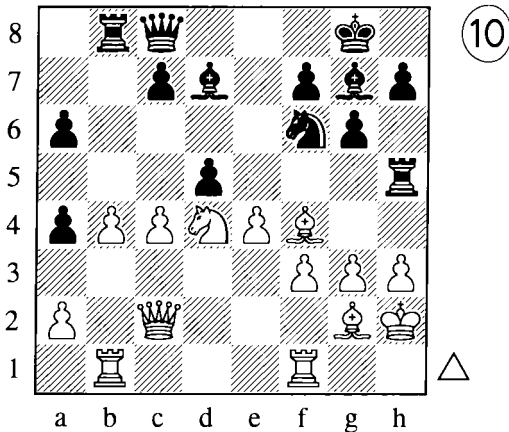
Navara – Spoelman, *Elimination*



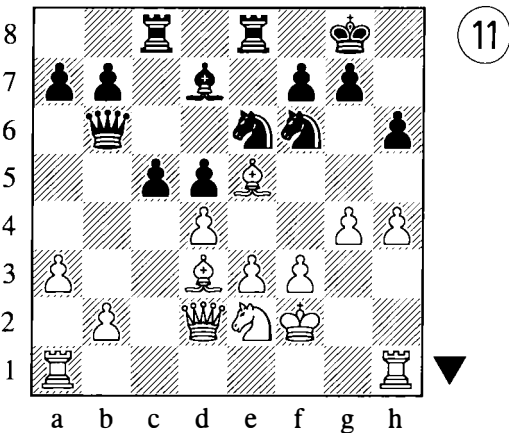
Kosintseva – Arakhamia-Grant, *Intermediate Moves*



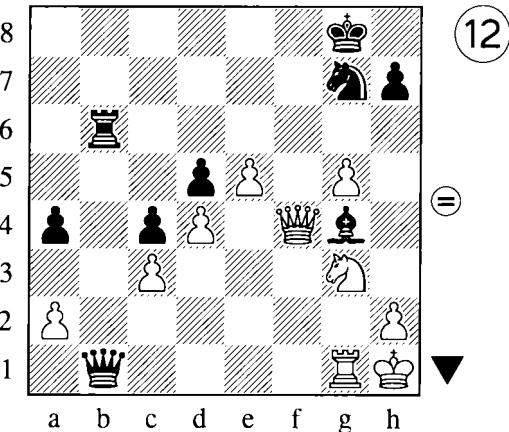
Eljanov – Nisipeanu, *Intermediate Moves*



Vitiugov – Alekseev, *Candidate Moves*

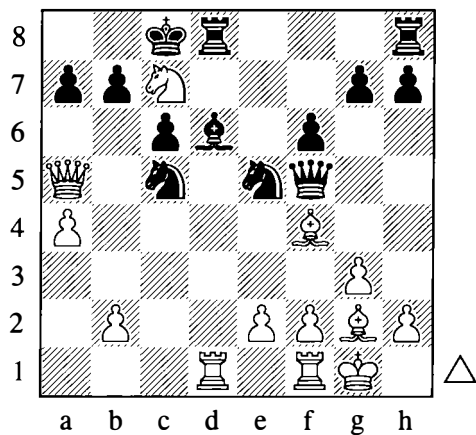


Djurhuus – Hammer, *Imagination*

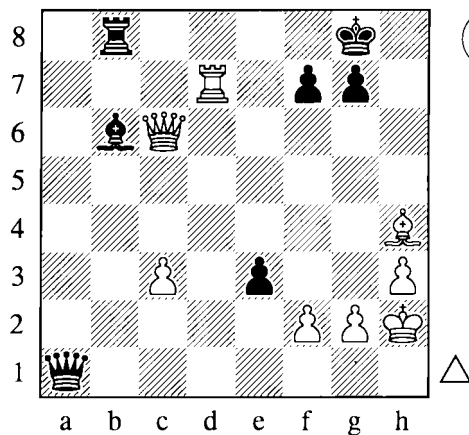


Gupta – Kuzubov, *Imagination***Smirin – Berry, *Combinational Vision***

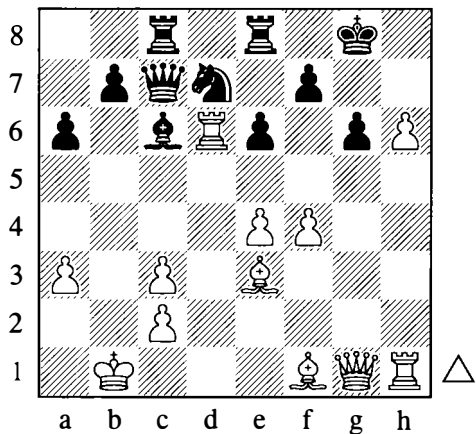
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**Stockfish – Critter, *Combinational Vision***

14



7. Caruana – Areshchenko, Olginka 2011

26.♔e2!! A superb winning move; the first threat is ♖e4. The immediate 26.♖e4?? would be an awful mistake. After 26...♞d1† 27.♔g2 ♜g8† 28.♔h3 ♖h5† Black wins. 26.♙f5? would allow 26...♞b5†! 27.♔g2 (27.♔e1 ♔g8 is also not dangerous) 27...♔g8!, when White has to play 28.♙xh7†! ♔xh7 29.♖h4† with a perpetual. After 26.d6? ♖xe6 White does not have anything following 27.♙f5 ♖xf5 28.dxe7 ♞b1† 29.♔e2 ♖a2† 30.♔f1 ♜e8 31.♙xf6† ♔g8. 26.♔e1!? is the closest to an alternative. After 26...♜g8 27.♙xf6† exf6 28.♖xf6† ♜g7 29.♞d4 White retains a significant advantage. **26...♖a2†** 26...♔g8 27.♖e3! ♖a2† 28.♔f1 and White wins. The plan is ♖g5† followed by ♖h6. **27.♔e1!** Black is now done. The threat of ♖e4 is devastating. **27...♔g8** 27...♖a5† 28.♔d1! ♔g8 29.♖h4 wins for White. The basic idea is 29...♖a3 30.♞g3† ♔h8 31.♖h3!. **28.♖h4** 28.♖e3 and 28.♖f4 won as well. **28...♖a5†** **29.♔e2 ♖a2†** **30.♔e1 ♖a5†** **31.♔d1 ♖a3** **32.♞g5† ♔h8** **33.♖f5 ♖a4†** **34.♔e2 ♖h4** **35.d6 exd6** **36.e7 1–0**

8. Navara – Spoelman, Wijk aan Zee 2011

A typical example of the use of the method of elimination. Black has many options and most of them have tactical refutations. **32...♞f7?** This is refuted very easily, so let's see the alternatives: **32...♙f7?** 33.♞g4† is just mate. **32...♔xf6?!** is the best of the bad. White plays 33.♜e6!± and the knight is lost. 33...♔h7? 34.♜xe8! is the point, of course. **32...♖h7?** This has a number of refutations. Easiest is probably 33.♜xe8!, but I prefer 33.f7†! ♖xf7 34.♞g4† ♖g7 35.♜xf8† ♔xf8 36.♜xe8† winning the queen. **32...♔h8!** is therefore the only move. You can make up ideas, such as no check on the g-file or no f7† available, but the reality of chess is that if you cannot refute it, it needs to be played. Ideas can come from many places, but the verification process should be a bit more controlled. 33.♜xe8!? (33.♞g4 ♜g8 34.♞d4 ♔h7 and Black is okay) 33...♜xe8 34.♖h5 (34.f7 ♜f8 35.♖e6 ♔g7 and White needs to take the repetition immediately.) 34...♔xf6! (34...♞d8 also holds.) 35.♜xf6 ♙e1† 36.♔f2 ♖a7†! 37.♔g3 (37.♔xe1? ♖e7†) 37...♖e3† 38.♔h2 Black has at least a draw, but sadly not more. We can now briefly see the end of the game: **33.♞g3† ♔h8** **34.♞g7** White wins. **34...♖xg7** **35.fxg7† ♔xg7** **36.♖e5† ♔g6** **37.♞b8 ♔f6** **38.♜e7 1–0**

9. N. Kosintseva – Arakhamia-Grant, Tbilisi 2011

White played a fantastic combination in the game, but then failed to see the reason why it was winning. **19.♔c5!! ♖c6** Forced. 19...dxc5 20.♖xe5† just allows White to win a pawn and take control. **20.♔xb7! ♔xb7** **21.♜c3 ♖a4** **22.♜a3?!** Missing the winning move: 22.♜c4!! ♞b5 (22...♞d7 23.♞b4† is just mate) 23.a4 ♞b6 24.♙e3 ♖a5 25.♙d2 (25.♞d3 ♔a8 26.♞b3 ♞b8 27.♜c6 is just as good) 25...♞d5 26.♙e1 White wins. **22...♖c6** **23.♞dd3?** 23.♜c3! would have given White another chance to find the winning combination. **23...d5** **24.♞db3† ♔a7** **25.♜c3 ♖b7** **26.♜c7?!** A little stronger was: 26.♞ab3 ♙b4 27.♙d2 ♙xc3 28.♜xb7† ♔xb7 29.♙xc3 ♜he8± **26...♙xa3** **27.♖e3† d4** **28.♜xb7† ♔xb7** **29.♖xa3** White has lost most of her advantage, but luckily for her, Black now blunders. **29...♜he8?** 29...♞d7± would have been stronger. **30.♞b3† ♔a7** **31.♙xf6 gxf6** **32.♖xf7† ♔b6** **33.♖xf6† ♔b7** **34.♖g7† ♔b6** **35.♖xh7 ♜f8** **36.♖g6† ♔b5** **37.a4† ♔a5** **38.♖c6 1–0**

10. Eljanov – Nisipeanu, Konya 2011

White had a great chance to take the full point with: **21.g4!** Instead White played 21.e5?, allowing Black to gain real counterplay with: 21...♙xh3! 22.♔g1 dxc4 23.exf6 (23.♔c6!? ♔d5!

24.♖xc4 ♗xg2 25.♖xd5 ♖h3 26.g4 ♗xf1 27.♖xf1 ♗h6!! 28.♜xb8 ♗xf4 29.♖d8†=) 23...♗xf6 24.♗e3 c5 25.bxc5 ♖xb1 26.♖xb1 ♗xd4 27.♗xd4 ♗f5 28.♖b2 ♗xb1 29.♖xb1 c3 30.♖c2 ♖xc5 31.♗xc5 ♖xc5† 32.♜f1 ♖e3 33.♖e2 ♖c5 34.♖c2 ♖e3 35.♖e2 ♖g5 36.♖c2 ♖e3 A draw was agreed. **21...♜xg4† 22.fxg4 ♗xg4** This was certainly Black's idea, but here White had a chance to throw a curveball (to go all American) with **23.♜c6!!** winning an important tempo. After **23...♜h8 24.♜xb8 ♗xh3 25.♜c6** White has simply too much material: **25...♗xg2† 26.♜xg2 ♖g4† 27.♗g3 dxe4 28.♖xf7+–**

11. Vitiugov – Alekseev, Taganrog 2011

In an apparently harmonious position Black found a big tactical shot: **19...♜xd4! 20.exd4** 20.♗xd4 is of course possible, but Black has his resources there as well: 20...cxd4 21.♜xd4 (21.exd4 ♜e4†! 22.fxe4 dxe4 and the white position is a ruin) 21...♗xg4! Black is simply much better. White cannot take the bishop because of: 22.fxg4 ♜xg4† 23.♜g2 ♜xe3† 24.♜g1 Black is completely winning at this point, for example after something simple like 24...g6, but he also has a very nice combination in 24...♖c4!! Deflection of the bishop on d3 in order to open up the queen. 25.♗xc4 ♖g6† 26.♜h2 ♖e4 27.♜f3 ♖d6† 28.♜h3 ♖e6† 29.♜h2 ♜xc4 30.♖g2 ♖e2 and Black wins. **20...c4 21.♖b4!** White heads for a poor ending and was actually successful in saving the game! 21.♜g3 cxd3 22.♜c3 ♗xg4! also wins for Black. 23.fxg4 ♖xc3! is the point. **21...♖xb4 22.axb4 cxd3 23.♜c3 ♖c4 24.♜g3 ♗e6?** Blundering away the advantage. Black had to play energetically to stay ahead. After 24...♜xg4! 25.fxg4 f6 26.♗f4 ♖xd4 27.♖ae1 ♖xe1 28.♖xe1 g5 29.♖e7 ♗c6 30.hxg5 hxg5 31.b5 ♖xf4 32.bxc6 bxc6 Black has all the chances. **25.b5 ♜d7 26.♖xa7=** The game was drawn on move 43.

12. Djurhuus – Hammer, Norway 2010

37...♗h3!! In the game Black was lost after 37...♗d1? 38.♖f1! and resigned three moves later. **38.♖h4 ♗g2†!!** The magic recipe. 38...♖d3? 39.♖xh3 ♖f3† does not work at all. After 40.♖g2 ♖xg2† 41.♜xg2 ♖b2† 42.♜f3 ♖xa2 43.♜g4! a3 44.♜f5± Black is going to suffer a lot in the ending and probably lose. The white king is very strong. **39.♜xg2 ♖b2† 40.♜h1 ♜f5!** The final point. 40...♖d3?! is worse. After 41.♖f1 ♖b1 42.♖f4 ♖xf1† 43.♖xf1 ♖xc3 44.♖f6! White retains an edge due to the threats to the black king. **41.♖g4 41.♜xf5 ♖xf5+–** would suddenly make the endgames awful for White, with his king stuck on the first rank. **41...♖c2 42.♖h3 a3** Black is by no means worse.

13. Gupta – Kuzubov, Port Erin 2005

20.♖xd6?! ♖xd6 21.♜d5± was the idea played by Gupta in the game. This was also dangerous, but Black still had a lot of resources: 21...cxd5 (21...♖xd5!? 22.♗xd5 ♖d8 23.♖xc5 ♖xd5 24.♖f8† ♖d8 25.♖xg7± is good for White, but not totally clear.) 22.♖xc5† ♖c6 23.♖xa7 ♖d8 24.b4 ♖a6 25.♖c1† ♖c6 26.♖d1 (26.♖xc6†! bxc6 27.♖xg7 would have been very close to winning.) 26...♖a6 27.♖c5† ♖c6 28.♖a5 ♖a6 29.♖c5† (29.♖c1†! ♖c6 30.♖xc6† bxc6 31.b5→) 29...♖c6 30.♖b5 ♖cd6 31.♗e3 ♜c4 32.♗c5 ♖c2 33.♖f1? (33.♗h3† ♜b8 34.♗xd6† ♜xd6 35.♖d3±) 33...♖c6 34.e4 ♖a6 35.♗e7 ♜a3 36.♖c5† ♖xc5 37.bxc5 d4 38.♗xd8 ♜xd8 39.e5 fxe5 40.♗xb7 ♖xa4 ½–½

20.♜b5!! This is a fantastic move. **20...cxb5** 20...♗b8 21.♜xa7† is obviously useless. **21.♖xa7** It slowly becomes clear that the opening of the diagonal from g2 to b7 has

given White a strong attack. Black has no good way of defending his position: **21...♖d7** 21...bxa4 22.♖d5 (or 22.♙e3) 22...♜c6 23.♖b6 and White wins: 23...♜d7 24.♖xd8† ♖xd8 25.♖xf5; 21...♜d7 22.♙xe5! ♖xe5 (22...fxe5 23.♖xc5 and wins.) 23.♖d5 ♖e6 24.♖xc5 White is winning. **22.♖c1** White is winning easily. For example: **22...♖c7 23.♙h3† ♜ed7 24.♖a8† ♖b8 25.♙xd6 ♖xa8 26.♖xc5#**

14. Stockfish – Critter, Trier 2010

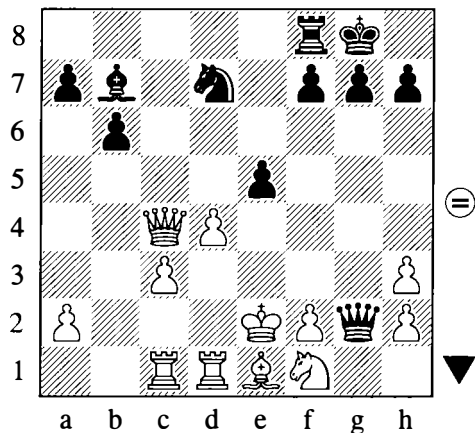
Usually I do not like to use computer games for training, but this combination is quite nice and could have been played in a game between humans – if we forget about the playing on a queen down part... **22.h7†!** 22.f5?! is also quite strong, but Black can resist a bit: 22...♖xd6 23.fxg6 ♜h8 24.gxf7 ♖g8! 25.fxg8=♖† ♖xg8 26.♖f2 ♙xe4 White is evidently better, but this is not a fully winning position. **22...♜h8** 22...♜g7 23.♙d4† e5 24.fxe5 ♜xe5 25.h8=♖† and White wins everything. **23.♙d4†** 23.♖xd7 ♙xd7 24.♙d4† e5 25.♖g5! ♖d8 26.♙xe5† ♖xe5 27.♖xe5† f6 28.♖d4 will also win for White in the long run and is an acceptable secondary solution. **23...e5 24.fxe5 ♜xe5 25.♖xg6!!** Making the most out of the pin. Black has no ...f6 ideas after this. **25...fxg6 26.♖xg6 ♖g7** The threat of ♙c4 followed by ♖g8† made the computer give up a truckload of material. What better argument for this being a winning position is needed? 26...♙xe4 can be met with 27.♖xe4, but a human would probably just take the extra rook with 27.♖f6† ♖g7 28.♖xg7† ♜xg7 29.h8=♖† and live without the tempo “won” in the game. **27.♖xg7† ♜xg7 28.h8=♖†! ♖xh8 29.♙xe5†** Black was mated on move 53... 1–0

15. Smirin – Berry, Rogaska Slatina 2011

White missed a great finish: **35.♖xf7!!** In the game, after 35.♖d6? exf2 36.♖xb8† ♜h7 37.♙xf2 ♙xf2 38.h4 Black could have made a draw with: 38...♖g1†! 39.♜h3 ♖h1† 40.♖h2 ♖e1! and White is not better in any way. 41.g3 (41.♖d6 ♖xc3† 42.g3 ♖c8† 43.♜g2 ♖b7† 44.♜xf2 ♖b2† 45.♜g1 ♖b1† 46.♜g2 ♖e4† is a nice perpetual check) 41...♖e6† 42.g4 f5! 43.♖xf2 fxg4† 44.♜g3 ♖xd7= 35.♖f3?! ♖f8 36.fxe3 ♖xc3 37.♙g5± Of course this favours White, but not greatly. **35...♜xf7** 35...exf2 would lose to: 36.♖d5! (but after 36.♖c4? ♖g1† 37.♜g3 ♜h8 White has nothing) 36...♖g1† 37.♜g3 ♜h8 38.♖e5!! Black is under too many forms of attack. He has to play 38...f1=♜† 39.♖xf1 ♖e3† 40.♖xe3 ♙xe3, but this ending is hopeless. **36.♖d5†** 36.♖c4† ♜g6 37.♖e4† transposes. **36...♜g6** 36...♜e8 37.♖e6† ♜f8 38.♙e7† ♜e8 39.♙f6† ♜f8 40.♖e7† ♜g8 41.♖xg7# **37.♖e4† ♜h6!** The best try. 37...♜f7 38.♖f4† ♜g6 39.♖xb8 wins for White because of the threat of taking the bishop with check. **38.♖f5!!** White changes his tactic. Now it is the king he is after. 38.♖f4† ♜h7! is only a draw, as 39.♖xb8? exf2 no longer works. **38...♙d8! 39.♙xd8 ♖xd8 40.g4!** White's attack on the poorly placed king continues! **40...g5** 40...g6 41.g5† ♜g7 42.♖f6† ♜h7 43.♖e7† and White wins. **41.♖f6† ♜h7 42.♖f7† ♜h6 43.♖h5† ♜g7 44.♖xg5† ♜f7 45.♖xd8 exf2 46.♖d5† ♜g6 47.♖f5† ♜g7 48.♖xf2** White wins.

Tal – Psakhis, *Imagination*Korobov – Esen, *Intermediate Moves*

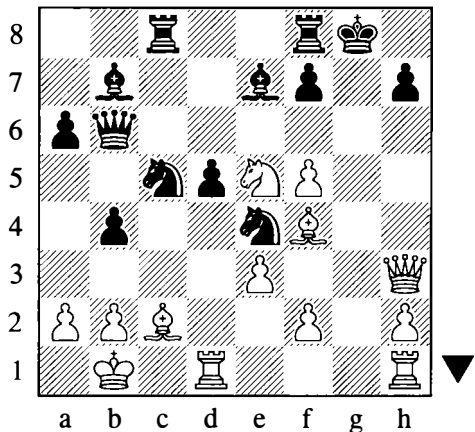
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Gagunashvili – Roy Chowdhury, *Prophylaxis*

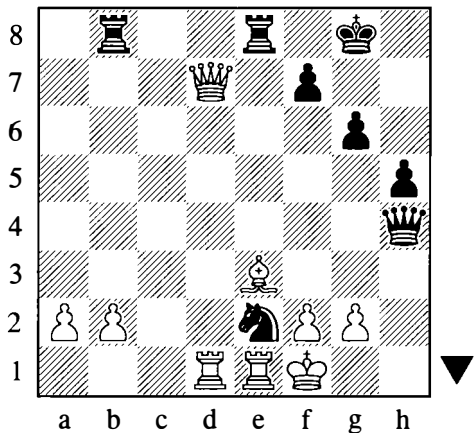
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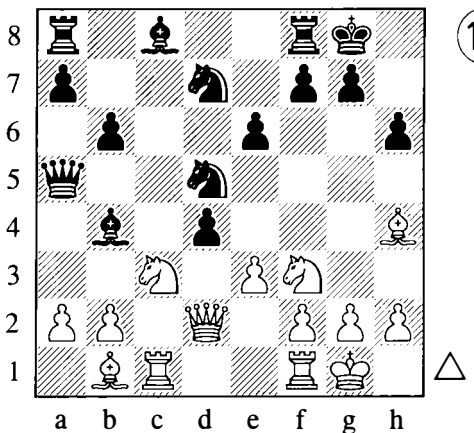
Stevic – Kozul, *Comparison*

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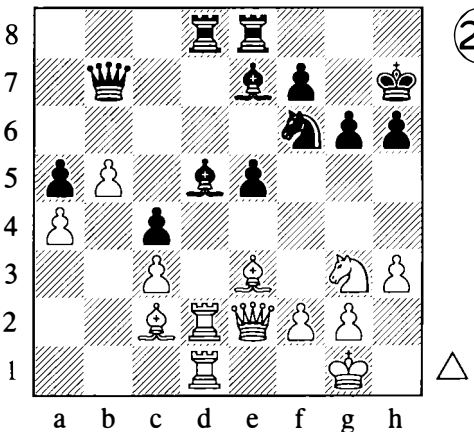
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Radulski – Rusev, *Combinational Vision*

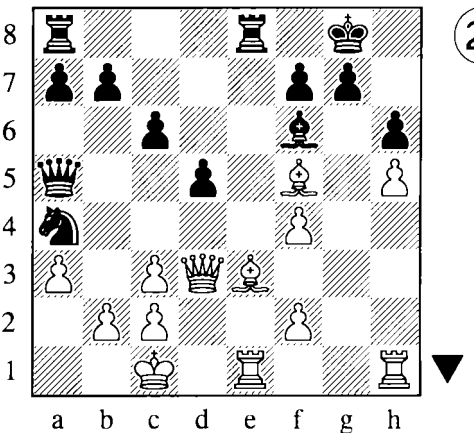
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Nakamura – Giri, *Combinational Vision*

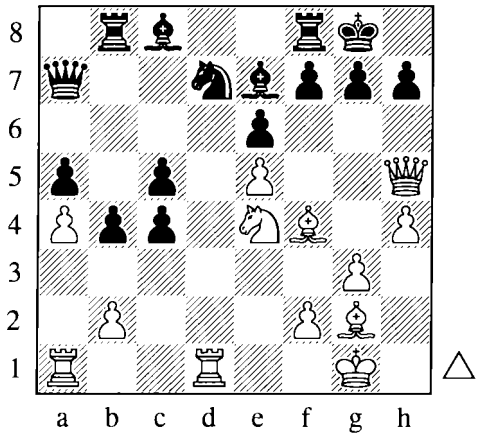
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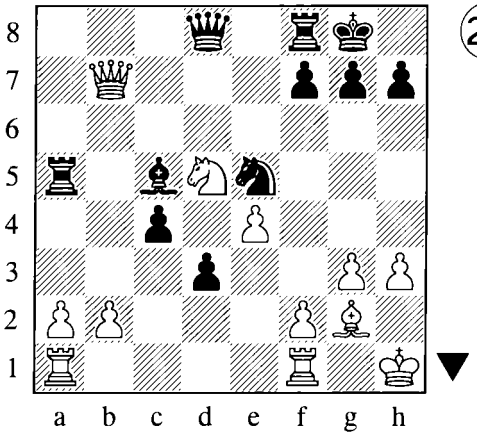
Ragger – Steingrímsson, *Intermediate Moves*

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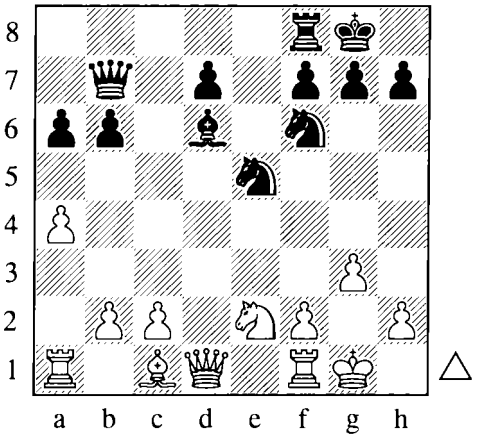
Hausrath – Avrukh, *Prophylaxis*

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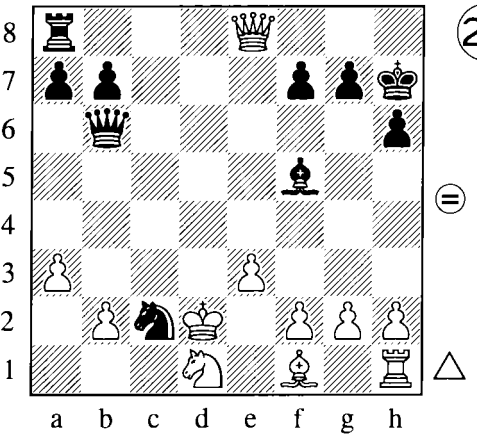
Dworakowska – Lahno, *Elimination*

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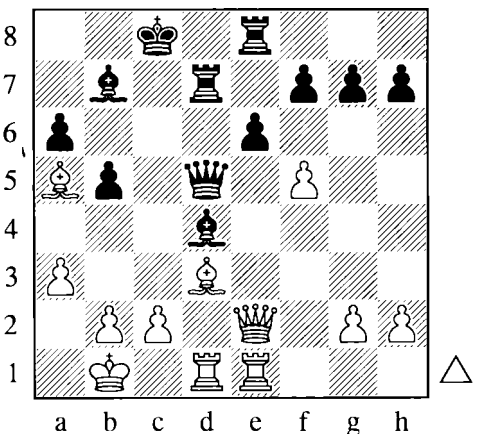
Vaganian – Planinec, *Prophylaxis*

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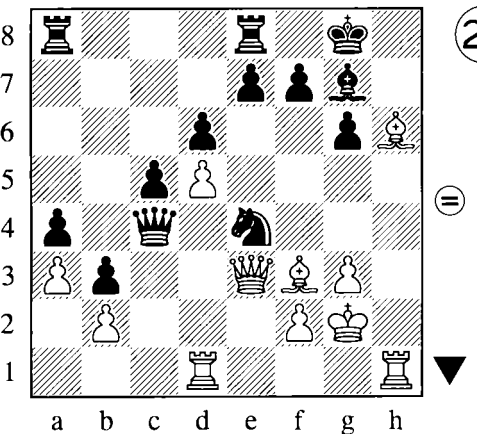
Naiditsch – Vachier-Lagrave, *Prophylaxis*

24



Javakhishvili – Kozul, *Elimination*

27



16. Tal – Psakhis, Tallinn 1983

21...♟f3† In the game White won after 21...exd4? 22.cxd4± ♘c5? 23.dxc5 ♟f3† 24.♔d2 ♟a3 25.♟b3 ♔d8† and Black resigned without waiting for the reply. 21...♘c5 transposes. **22.♔d2 ♘c5!!** This is a wonderful combination with clearance at its heart. **23.dxc5** Also after 23.♔c2 ♔d5! 24.♟b4 ♟e2† 25.♔d2 ♔e4† 26.♔b2 ♘d3† 27.♔a1 ♟xf1 Black's chances are not worse. For example: 28.♟c4 ♔f5 29.dxe5 ♔c8 30.♔xd3 ♟xd3 31.♟xd3 ♔xd3 with a draw. **23...♔e4!!** **24.♔a1** 24.♟xe4 ♟xe4 25.♘e3 is of course possible, but I cannot believe that Black is worse here. Who knows, maybe he is even better? **24...♔d8†** **25.♔c1 ♔xd1†** **26.♔b2 ♔xa1** **27.♘d2!** An important intermediate move. 27.♔xa1? b5!! is absolutely devastating: 28.♟b3 ♟e2 29.♔d2 ♟xf1† 30.♔b2 ♟xf2 and Black wins. **27...♔xe1!?** Playing for a win. 27...♟d1 28.♟xe4 ♟c1† 29.♔b3 ♟d1† leads to a perpetual check. **28.♘xf3 b5!** **29.♘e1 bxc4** Black can hardly be worse in the ending.

17. Gagunashvili – Roy Chowdhury, Dubai 2011

20...♘c3†? This very attractive move was played in the game. Unfortunately the knight was badly needed on the kingside as well! **20...♔h8!** would have secured Black a huge advantage. A possible conclusion to the game could have been: 21.♔hg1 ♘c3†! 22.♔a1 ♟a5 23.♘g6† fxg6 24.♔e5† ♔f6 25.♔xc3 ♔xc3! 26.fxg6 ♔c7 27.g7†! ♔xg7 28.♔xg7 ♔xg7 29.♟xh7† ♔f6 30.♔g1 ♔f7 Black will weather the storm and win the game with his extra material after something like 31.♟h4† ♔e6 32.bxc3 b3!. Instead the game concluded: **21.♔a1 ♟a5** 21...♔h8 22.bxc3 ♔f6 23.♟h6! gives White a winning attack. 23...♟d8 24.♔hg1 ♟e7 25.♔g5! is a nice example: 25...♔g8 26.♟xh7† ♔xh7 27.♔h5† ♔g7 28.♔h6† ♔h7 29.♔f8# **22.a3 ♘b3†** **23.♔xb3 bxa3** 23...♘d1 24.a4!! is the most fantastic point. White's attack is too dangerous to be allowed to stay active. 24...♔f6 25.♔g1† ♔g7 26.♔xg7† ♔xg7 27.♟g3† ♔h8 28.♘xf7† with mate. **24.♟g3† ♔h8** **25.♘xf7†! ♔xf7** **26.♔e5† ♔f6** **27.bxc3 ♔e8?** 27...♟d8± was a better chance, but still not good of course. **28.♔xf6† ♔xf6** **29.e4!** **♟b5** **30.♔hg1 ♟d7** **31.e5 1–0**

18. Stevic – Kozul, Otocac 2010

The combination is not too surprising in itself, but keeping the details in your head can be a challenge. This is why you are training! **29...♔xe3!!** **30.fxe3 ♘g3†** **31.♔g1** 31.♔f2 ♔xb2† just wins. **31...♟h1†** **32.♔f2 ♔xb2†!** **33.♔xg3** 33.♔d2 ♔xd2† 34.♟xd2 ♘e4† and the queen is lost. **33...♟xg2†!** In the game Black actually got it wrong and played 33...♔xg2†? when White could have won with 34.♔f3. Instead White returned the compliment and lost after: 34.♔f4?? (34.♔f3!! ♔g1† 35.♔e2 ♟h2† 36.♔d3+–) 34...♟h4† 35.♔e5 ♔g5† 36.♔d6 ♟b4† 37.♔c7 ♔c5† 38.♔d8 ♟b6† 39.♔e8 ♔e5† 40.♟e7 ♟b8† 41.♔d8 ♟b5† 42.♔d7 ♔xe7† 0–1 **34.♔f4** 34.♔h4 ♟f2† 35.♔g5 ♔g7 and White is mated. **34...♔b5!!** The direct winning move, although Black also has a good edge in the long line starting with 34...♔xa2!?. Now Black wins the queen.

19. Korobov – Esen, Aix-les-Bains 2011

I have long liked Anton Korobov's games. In some ways he reminds me of Tal, the way a slight inaccuracy against him can quickly lead you to a position where you cannot defend your king. The following game is an excellent illustration of this. I don't know if Black's new move on move 13 was preparation. I would think not the way things went... **14.♟c2!** No time is wasted. When Black took on d4 he certainly did not expect for this to become a transit square. However, this is what is happening now. **14...g6** 14...♘5f6 looks solid, but it is impossible for Black to survive the direct onslaught with:

15. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 16. ♜e4! Black has a few options, none of them sufficient. 16...d3 (16...♜d5 17. ♜xd4+; 16...♞f5 17. ♜xf6+ gxf6 18. ♞b3 ♞a5 19. ♜xd4 ♙c5 20. ♜c6 ♞a6 21. ♞fd1+— with the idea 21...♙b7 22. ♙d3; 16...♜xe4 17. ♞xe4 g6 18. ♞xa8+—) 17. ♞xd3 ♜d5 18. ♜eg5 f5 19. ♞xc8! ♞xc8 20. ♜xe6 ♜f6 21. a3 ♙f8 22. ♜f4+— White's attack on the light squares cannot be withstood. Next comes ♜f3-d4(xf5). **15. ♜xd5 ♞xd5** 15...exd5 loses a piece after 16. a3 ♙d6 17. ♞c6. **16. ♞fd1!** The rook comes into play with tempo. **16...♙c5** Trying desperately to get White to take on d4 with the pawn or knight – what he probably thought would come automatically when he took on d4. 16...♙b7 17. ♞xd4 loses a piece. Black can throw in 17...♞ac8!? (17...♞b5 loses in several ways. Simplest 18. a4 ♞h5 19. ♙g3+—) 18. ♞d1 ♞xc1 19. ♞xc1 ♞c8, but eventually the material loss will come: 20. ♞d1 ♞c6 21. ♞xb4 ♞c1 22. ♙d4 ♞xb2 23. ♞e1+— 16...e5 finally does make White take on d4 with a pawn; but now it will no longer be blockaded. White is winning after 17. a3 ♙d6 18. exd4+—, when Black has to play 18...e4 just to make more moves. Ironically, 19. ♜e5! is probably the strongest here; although taking the pawn is also winning, of course. **17. b4!** Black must have known this was coming, but what could he do? Not a lot, as we have seen. **17...♙xb4 18. ♞xd4 ♞a5 19. ♞g4!** The black king is not going to survive the onslaught. Black could have resigned here, but probably wanted to ensure that he made more than 20 moves. **19...f5** No other moves exist: 19...♜e5 20. ♜xe5 ♞xe5 21. ♞xb4+— or 19...♜h8 20. ♞xg6+—. **20. ♞xg6+ ♜h7 21. ♞xe6 ♙b7 22. ♞c7 ♞d5 23. ♞e5 1–0**

20. Radulski – Rusev, Bankya 2011

White has a pleasant position and could claim some advantage after 31.f3, but Radulski found a far stronger solution: **31. ♜h5!! ♙xg2** Black is lacking good options: 31...♙e6 32. ♜xf6+ ♙xf6 33. ♞h5! and the f6-bishop is overloaded. 31...♞g8 is refuted by 32. ♜h2!! with the threat of ♜xf6+, ♞xd5 and ♙e4+—. 32...e4 33. ♜f4 ♙d6 34. g3 ♙xf4 35. ♙xf4 White has not won material – yet. 31...♜g8 32. ♜xf6+ ♙xf6 33. ♙h6 is winning for White. But the proof of the roast is not in the carving, but the gobbling: 33...♙xg2 34. ♞xd8 ♙xd8 35. ♞xd8! ♞xd8 36. ♞xe5 f5 37. ♞f6 ♜h7 38. ♞xd8 ♜h6 39. ♞h8+ ♜g5 40. h4+ ♜g4 41. ♙d1+ ♙f3 (41...♜h3 42. ♞e5! and wins) 42. ♞d8! ♜h3 43. ♞d6 Black is mated. **32. ♞xc4 ♜d5 33. ♙e4! ♙xe4 34. ♞xe4 f5 35. ♞c4 f4 35...ggh5 36. ♞xd5 ♞g8+ 37. ♜f1** gives White a winning advantage. For example: 37...f4 38. ♞e4+ ♞g6 39. ♙c1 and he is in control. Here White played 36. ♞xd5?±, but still won on move 45. Better was **36. ♙c5! ggh5 37. ♞e4+ ♜h8 38. ♙xe7 ♞xe7 39. ♞xd5** and the game could end just about here.

21. Nakamura – Giri, Emilia Reggio 2012

Giri did see **21...♜xc3!** but was afraid of **22. ♙d2** when he did not feel comfortable. Instead 22.bxc3? is easier to get control of: 22...♙xc3 23. ♞eg1 (23. ♜d1 d4! and Black wins his piece back) 23...c5! Black has a winning attack, e.g. 24. ♞xd5 ♞xa3+ 25. ♜d1 ♞ad8 26. ♙d7 ♞e7. **22...d4!** There is no way for White to exploit the pin. Black has simply won a pawn. Instead Giri played 21...♜c5!? with only a tiny advantage. However he did win on move 41 all the same.

22. Ragger – Steingrimsen, Solingen 2012

18. ♞xd7! ♞xd7 18...♙xd7 19. ♜f6+ is not too hard to figure out. After 19...gxf6 (19...♙xf6 is obviously not working) 20. exf6 ♙xf6 21. ♙e4 ♞fe8 the candidate move 22. ♙d6! leads straight to mate. **19. ♞d1!** 19. ♜f6+?! gxf6 20. exf6 ♙xf6 does not work. White needs the control of the d-file. And 21. ♞d1 ♙xb2!∞ should be okay for Black. For example: 22. ♞g4+ ♜h8 23. ♞xd7 ♙xd7 24. ♙xb8 ♞xb8 25. ♞f4 ♞g8 26. ♞xf7 ♙e8 27. ♞xe6 ♙d4 28. ♙d5 ♞f8 29. ♞e7 ♞xf2 30. ♜h1 ♙g6 31. ♙xc4 h5

32.♔d5 and Black should start considering giving that perpetual check. **19...♖xa4** 19...g6 20.♙xd7 gxf5 21.♙xe7 c3 is a funny defensive try. But after 22.bxc3 b3 (22...♙g7 23.♔d6+–) 23.♔h6!! b2 24.♔f6† ♔h8 25.♔e4! White continues with his winning attack: 25...♙b7 26.♔xh7 ♔f3 27.♔h2 b1=♖ 28.♔xb1 ♙xb1 29.g4 and wins. **20.♔f6† gxf6** 20...♔xf6 21.exf6 e5 is met by 22.♔e4! with mate to follow. **21.exf6 ♔xf6 22.♔e4 ♖xd1†!?** The best defensive try. In the game Black was mauled after 22...♔d8?! 23.♙xd8† ♔xd8 24.♖xh7† ♔f8 25.♖h8† ♔e7 26.♔g5† ♔d6 27.♖xd8† ♔e5 28.f3 ♖d7 29.♖f6† 1–0. Obviously sidelines exist, but not escapes. 22...h6 23.♖xh6! and Black is mated. **23.♖xd1** Black cannot save the rook as ♖g4† is threatened. **23...♔xb2? 24.♖g4†!** 24.♔xb8 f5 is less clear. It is all these pawns on the queenside that confuse matters! **24...♔h8 25.♔xb8 f5 26.♖f4** White wins.

23. Dworakowska – Lahno, Gaziantep 2012

White missed the chance to gain a big advantage. **16.♖xd6!** Instead the game went: 16.♔d4?! ♔c5 17.♙a3? (17.f4! ♔xd4† 18.♖xd4 ♔f3† 19.♙xf3 ♖xf3 20.♔d2= was better) 17...♔xa3 18.bxa3 ♖d5+ and Black won on move 60. **16...♔f3† 17.♔h1 ♔d2†** 17...♔e5?†! 18.f3! ♔xf3 19.♔f4 and Black has nothing: 19...♔d2† 20.♔g1 ♔xf1 21.♖d1! with full control. **18.f3 ♔xf1 19.♔d4 ♔g4 20.h3!** Not giving away the pawn! **20...♔ge3 21.♔g1** White would have great winning chances with her extra pawn.

24. Naiditsch – Vachier-Lagrave, Mulhouse 2011

19.♖f1!! A great prophylactic move. White is preparing ♔e4 with some added ideas. Mainly he is taking care of ...♖xg2. After 19.fxe6! ♙xe6 20.♖f1 g6± Black's position is a bit shaky, but there is no direct way for White to benefit. And 19.a4? bxa4 20.♔xa6 ♖xa5 simply does not work! **19...♔c6** 19...e5 20.c3 ♔a7 21.f6 g6 22.♔f5! and White wins. Also losing is 19...♖c5 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.♔xh7. 19...g6 20.♔e4 ♖c4 21.♔xb7† ♔xb7 22.fxg6 hxg6 23.c3 White wins a piece. The great prophylactic point is that on 19...♖xg2 White has 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.♙xe6! ♙h8 22.♖e1 with a winning attack: 22...♔b8 23.♙e8† ♙xe8 24.♖xe8† ♔c8 25.♔f5 **20.fxe6 fxe6 21.♔e4 ♖c5 22.♖f3!** Taking control of the f3–a8 diagonal. **22...♔d5 23.♔xd5 ♖xd5 24.♖xd5 24.♙e4! 24...♙xd5 25.♔b6 e5 26.♙xd4 1–0**

25. Hausrath – Avrukh, Mulhouse 2011

In the game Black played **27...♖b8? 28.♖xb8 ♙xb8** with some pressure, but White managed to neutralize it: **29.f4 ♔d7 29...♔c6! 30.♙fc1!** would also allow White to fight his way back into the game. **30.b3! g6?!** Around here Black loses his grip a little bit and ends up in a worse position. However, it is hard to understand that sometimes you lose your advantage and it will never return. The most natural line here would be 30...cxb3 31.axb3 ♙xa1 32.♙xa1 ♙xb3 33.♔f1! and White will make a draw. **31.bxc4 ♙b2 32.a4 ♙c2?! 33.♙fd1 d2 34.♔f1** White is two pawns up; Black needs to make the draw now. **34...♙a8 35.a5 ♔d4 36.♙ab1! 36.♔d3! ♙b2 37.♙ab1** would have been very strong. **36...♔c5 37.♔g2 ♔g7 38.♔b4? 38.e5 ♙xa5 39.♔b4 ♙b2 (39...♙c3 40.♔c6) 40.♙xb2 ♔xb2 41.♔c6 ♙a6 42.♙xd2** would have been very close to winning. Instead White takes the repetition. **38...♙c3 39.♔d5 ♙c2 40.♔b4 ♙c3 41.♔d5 ½–½**

27...f5 with the idea ...♙f7 is very compelling. The white queen is in serious trouble. But after 28.♔f4 ♙f7 29.♖d5 ♖xd5 30.♔xd5 ♙b7 31.b3 White seems to be on his way to making a draw. For example: 31...cxb3 32.axb3 ♙xa1 33.♙xa1 ♙xb3 34.exf5 ♔xf2 35.♔f6† ♔f8 36.♔xh7† ♔e7 37.♔g5 and the material is quite limited. Black has the advantage, but a full point is hard to squeeze out of this position. The correct idea is therefore to protect the knight on e5 while preparing to trap the queen.

Black wins after: **27...f6!! 28.♖c3** The queen is of course not fully trapped, but after **28.♞c7 ♞xc7 29.♗xc7 ♗d4!** the end result will be 0–1 anyway. Or **28.♗f4 ♖f7 29.♞d5 ♞b6 30.♞e6 ♗xf2** and Black wins. **28...♖f7 29.♞d5 ♞b6** Black wins. For example: **30.a4** Preparing ♗b5. **30...♗h8 31.f4 ♗d4 32.♗b5 ♖d7** And now the queen really is trapped.

26. Vaganian – Planinec, Hastings 1974

This is a very famous game, but what is less famous is that White could have saved the game. I noticed this about a week before I realized that the saving line was also in Suba's *Positional Chess Sacrifices*. Maybe it is given other places as well. The reason why I decided to keep it here anyway is that Marina Brunello solved it beautifully. **20.♞xa8! 20.♞b5? ♞f6** is nonsense of course. White needs to take the rook to compensate for the suffering he is facing. **20...♞d6† 21.♗c1!** Walking straight into the line Vaganian lost in. **21.♗c3?** loses beautifully: **21...♞e5† 22.♗d2 (22.♗b3 ♗a1† 23.♗a2 ♞d5† leads to mate.) 22...♞d5†! 23.♗c3 ♞a5†!! 24.b4** Maybe objectively this is best, but White is still unlikely to survive. (24.♗b3 ♗a1† 25.♗a2 ♞d5†! and again White is mated on the light squares.) **24...♞xa3† 25.♗d2 ♞xb4† 26.♗c3 ♗d4!** Just one of several strong moves. **27.e4** The only move. **27...♗xe4 28.♞xa7 ♗b3† 29.♗e3 f5 30.f3 ♞xc3† 31.♗f2 ♗d4 32.♞a2 ♗xf3** and White is without a chance. **21...♗a1! 22.♗c4!** Vaganian lost immediately with **22.♞xb7?? ♞c7† 0–1. 22...♞c7 23.♗c3! ♞xc4 24.♞d8!!** Black has dangerous-looking checks, but White has protected all the most vital squares. The chances are balanced: **24...♗b3† 25.♗d1 ♞g4† 26.♗e2 ♞e4! 27.♗e1 ♞b1† 28.♞d1 ♞xb2 29.♞d5!** The most clear-cut draw. **29.♗d4?! ♗xd4 30.♞xd4 ♞c1† 31.♞d1 ♞xa3** should probably favour Black a little. **29...♗c2 30.♗g3! ♞a1† 31.♗e2 ♗c1† 32.♖xc1 ♞xc1 33.♗e4** White is not worse.

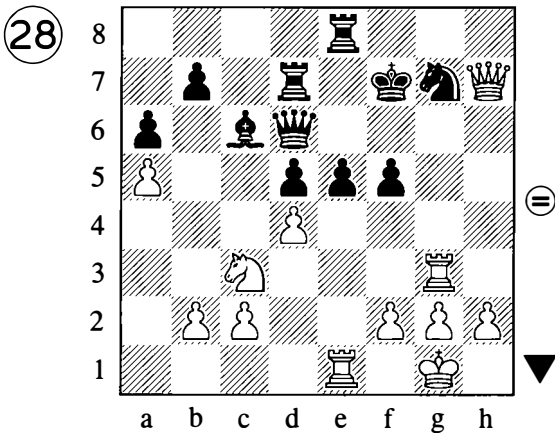
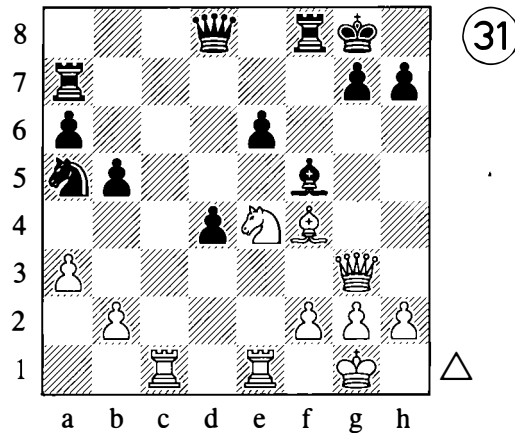
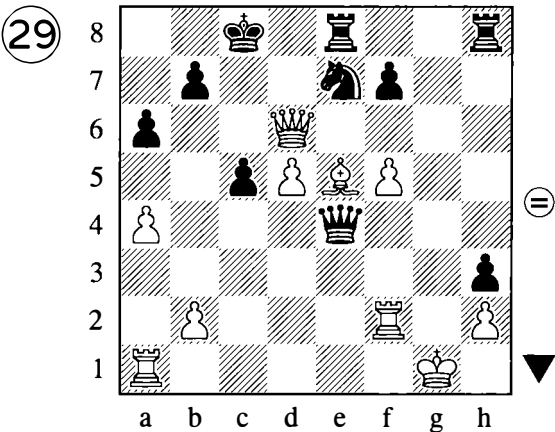
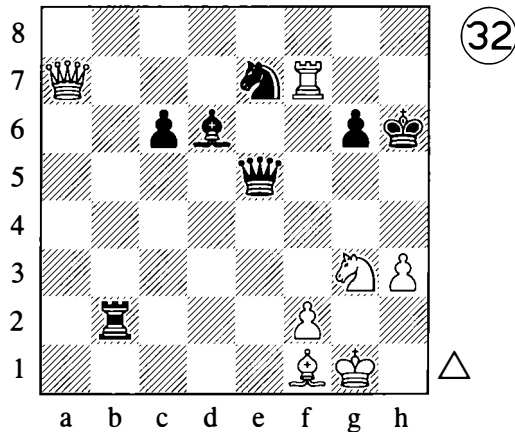
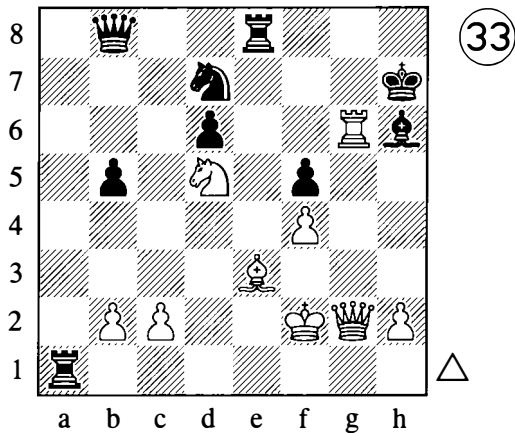
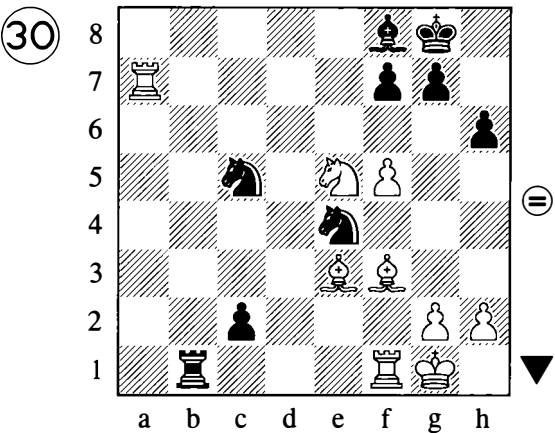
27. Javakhishvili – Kozul, Aix-les-Bains 2011

26...f5? This meets a fairly clear and direct refutation. **27.♗xg7 ♗xg7 28.♞h6† ♗f7 29.♞h7† ♗f6 30.♖h6** Black resigned, as **30...♖g8 31.♗h5!** spells the end. **1–0**

26...♗xb2? **27.♗xe4** is a natural place to look for resources for Black. But there are none to be found as the following five options show: **27...♞c3 28.♞e2! ♞f6 29.♖d3!** and the threat of ♖f3 is decisive. Black cannot resist all of the white pieces at once. **27...♗f6 28.♗xg6!** with a massacre on the light squares. **27...e6 28.♞f3!** Getting out of the X-ray attack. (28.♗g5 exd5 29.♗xd5 ♞xd5† 30.♖xd5 ♖xe3 31.♗xe3 ♗xa3 32.♖xd6 ♗b4 33.♖d3 b2 and it looks like Black should escape with a draw) **28...f5** Besides the fact that Black's position looks very dodgy indeed, it is also possible to find a direct win: **29.♖h4!!** Time is valued more highly than material. **29...fxe4 30.♖xe4** followed by **31.♞g4** with a devastating attack on the light squares. **27...♗e5 28.♖h4!** is in itself already enough to see that Black will not survive. For example: **28...♞c3 29.♖d3 ♞a1 30.♗xg6! fxg6 31.♞e4 ♗f7 32.♖f3† ♗f6 33.♞e6# 27...♗d4 28.♞f3 ♗f6** looks odd and is a true computer defence. White wins by sheer brutality: **29.♗d3 ♞c3 30.♞g4!** The sacrifice on g6 cannot be prevented. Black can delay it, but after **30...♞d4 31.♗e4 ♞c4 32.♖c1 ♞d4 33.♗e3** it clearly cannot be prevented forever.

26...♞c2? with the idea **27.♗xg7 ♞xf2†** with a poor endgame is possible. But this is also depressing. **27.♗xe4?! ♗xh6 28.♞f3 ♞xb2 29.♖xh6 ♞f6 30.♞g4** gives a strong attack, but is not necessarily stronger.

26...♗xg3!! is the right choice by elimination. After **27.fxg3 ♗xb2** Black is clearly in the game. Maybe he is even better. **27.♗xg7 ♗f5!** is therefore the forced continuation. **28.♞c3 ♗h4† 29.♖xh4 ♞xh4 30.♖h1 ♞g5† 31.♗f1 f6 32.♗h6 ♞e5** The position here is wildly complicated with all three results plausible. There is no reason to eliminate this...

Chatalbashev – Dembo, *Elimination*Tal – Psakhis, *Intermediate Moves*P.H. Nielsen – Gashimov, *Comparison*Moiseenko – Postny, *Imagination*Korobov – S. Zhigalko, *Intermediate Moves*Nepomniachtchi – Belov, *Imagination*

28. Chatalbashev – Dembo, Aix-les-Bains 2011

27...♟f6! 27...♞g8? loses to both 28.♞xe5! followed by ♞xf5 and 28.dxe5 ♞e7 29.♞e4!. 27...♟f8? is a tragic contribution to the comedy competition that can quickly be binned after the villain strikes with: 28.♞g5! ♟h8 29.♞xf5+ ♞e7 30.♞fxe5+ ♞f6 31.♟d3 White's attack is clearly devastating – and he needs to find a treasure island where all his pawns can grow up to be queens in peace and quiet. **28.dxe5 ♞e6!** The only move and quite a surprising one. 28...♞xe5 29.♟xg7+ is two pawns up in the ending. The knight goes to a2 and c1 if needed. 28...f4 29.e6+! is also just over. For example: 29...♞xe6 30.♞xe6! ♞xe6 31.♞g6, winning. **29.f4?** White should have preferred 29.♞e4 ♞xe5 30.♟g8+! ♞xg8 31.♞xf6+ ♞f7 32.♞xe5 ♞xf6 33.♞e2 with even chances in this complicated ending. **29...♟h6 30.♞h3?** A mistake, but after 30.♞xg7+ ♟xg7 31.♟xf5+ ♞e7 the compensation looks insufficient anyway. Black won this game on move 85, but could have cut the task shorter by a mile if she had played **30...♟xf4**, simply winning.

29. P.H. Nielsen – Gashimov, Khanty-Mansiysk (4.4) 2011

Black chose the wrong rook and had to win this knock-out match all over again. The correct rook is the one that is hanging on h8 – not the one which prevents White from occupying the e-file.

The move played in the game **38...♞cg8?** can actually be refuted in two ways. **39.♠g3!?** This leads to an advantage, but 39.♞f1! was the really clear-cut refutation. After 39...♟h1+ 40.♞e2 ♟e4+ 41.♞d2+ we can eliminate the line. Black has to exchange queens and go into a poor ending. **39...♞xg3+ 40.hxg3 h2+ 41.♞xh2 ♟e3+** An important difference from the ...♞hg8 line is that after 41...♟d4+ 42.♞f2 ♞xd5 the black rook is worse on h8. White now has a very strong option in 43.♞e1! ♞g8 44.a5, when White has asserted control. The immediate threat is ♟e5 with complete control. 44...♟d3!? 45.♟xc5+ ♞d7 46.♞g2 ♞xg3 47.♟f2 ♞xg2+ 48.♞xg2 and White should win, although it is hard with the queens still on the board. **42.♞f2! ♞xf5?!** Even after Black's best option 42...♞h3 43.♞g2 ♞h2+ 44.♞xh2 ♟xf2+ 45.♞h3 ♟xf5+ 46.g4 ♟h7+ 47.♞g3 ♟d3+ 48.♞h2 ♟e2+ 49.♞h3+ he would find the defence of the ending quite tiresome. But there are always chances here of course. **43.♟f4** White has consolidated his advantage and won on move 70.

38...♞hg8+! 39.♠g3! The simplest comparison is that after 39.♞f1 ♟h1+ 40.♞e2 ♟e4+ we have a straight perpetual check. With no rook hanging on h8 White does not have 41.♞d2? in view of 41...♟xd5+!. **39...♞xg3+!** This is still essential. **40.hxg3 h2+!** 40...♞xf5 41.♟f4+ 41.♞xh2 ♟d4+ **42.♞f2 ♞xd5=** Here the surprise is that the rook is much better placed on the e-file than on the h-file. The following line shows some of the differences. Note that Black is actually not planning to exchange queens. His plan if allowed would be ...♞d8 and ...♞e3 with fantastic counterplay. Actually it is White who has to keep the balance: **43.♞c1! c4! 44.♟a3 c3 44...♞b8!?** **45.♞xc3+** Forced. 45.bxc3? ♟e3 and Black wins. **45...♞xc3 46.♟xc3+ ♟xc3 47.bxc3 ♞e3**

30. Korobov – S. Zhigalko, Aix-les-Bains 2011

The game saw some random moves made in the ugly face of the time control: **36...♞b3? 37.♠xe4 ♠c5 38.♞a8+!** A nice intermediate check to have as White. **38...♞h7 39.f6+ g6 40.g3??** Time trouble makes people mad. 40.♞xb1 was just over. And 40.♞f2 ♠xe3+ 41.♞xe3 ♞xf1 42.♠xc2 also wins. **40...♠xe3+ 41.♞g2 ♞xf1 42.♠xc2 ♞f2+ 43.♞h3 ♞xc2 44.♞xf7?! 44.♞f8! ♞c7 45.♞xf7 g5 46.♞g4 ♞xf7! 47.♞xf7+ ♞g6 48.♞b7 ♞d2= 44...g5 45.♞e5 h5 45...♠d4!? 46.f7 ♞f2**

47.f8=♖ ♖xf8 48.♞xf8 ♙xe5 46.f7 g4† 47.♜xg4 hxg4† 48.♜xg4 ♙h6 49.f8=♖ ♙xf8 50.♞xf8
The game was drawn in 120 moves.

Black's idea was okay, he just needed an intermediate move to prepare it. **36...♜d2!! 37.♙xd2 ♜b3** Black can also play 37...♜e4 38.♞c1 ♜xd2 39.♞a1 ♙c5† 40.♜h1 ♙d4 41.♞axb1 cxb1=♖ 42.♞xb1 ♜xb1 with an obvious draw. **38.♙c1** White should of course not fall for 38.♙e3? ♜d2!! when he even loses. **38...♙c5† 39.♜h1 ♙xa7 40.♙e4 ♞xc1 41.♞xc1 ♜xc1 42.♙xc2=**

31. Tal – Psakhis, Sochi 1982

21.♙c7! ♞a8 21...♞d5 22.♙d6! is another great little move that completely ruins Black's coordination. If the rook moves there will be a decisive check – and alternatives do not exist. **22.♙b6!!** This is Tal's brilliant concept. The rook does not have a good square to go to. It will either be in the way, ready to be pinned or within the shooting range of the knight, causing Black to lose the exchange and subsequently the game. On the other hand 22.♙xa5? ♙xe4± is nothing special. **22...♞e7 22...♙xe4 23.♙xa7** gives White an extra exchange. The queen is overloaded. **22...♞af7 23.♜d6** and **22...♞b7 23.♙xa5** are no better. **23.♙xa5 ♙xe4 24.♙b4 1–0**

32. Moiseenko – Postny, Ningbo 2011

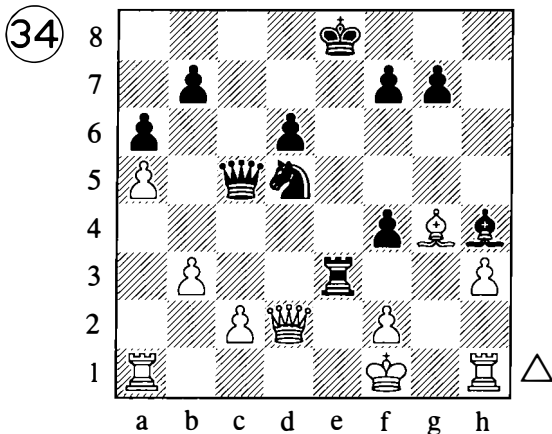
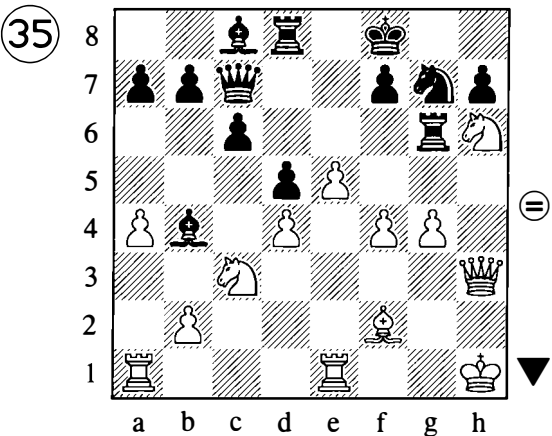
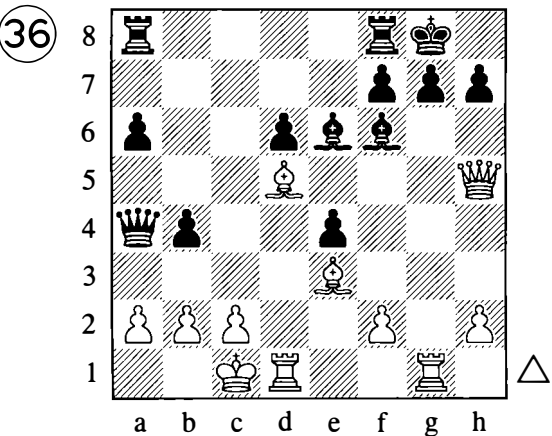
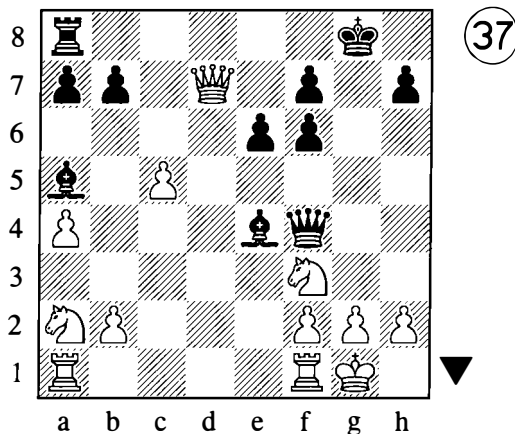
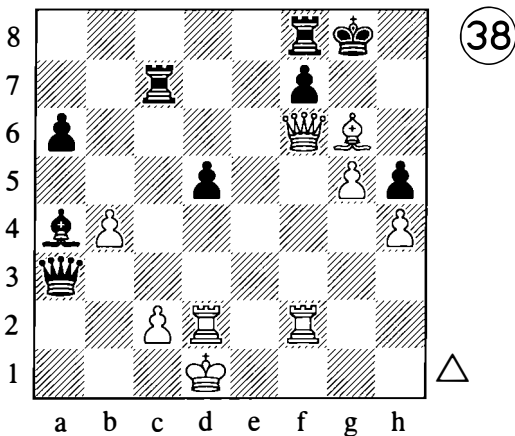
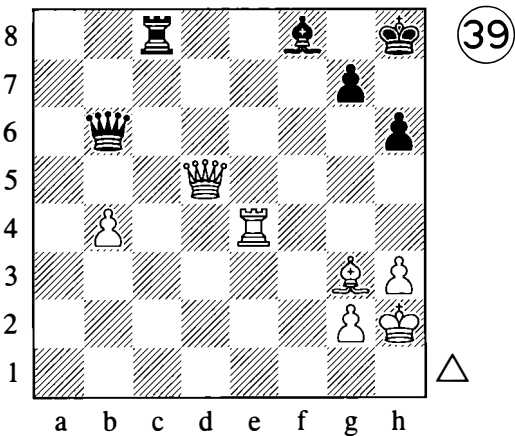
I am very impressed with the way Moiseenko won this game. **43.♞a1!!** White needs to give a check on c1 to win; so the queen goes there. Simple, but hard to do. **43...♙c5 43...♜d5 44.♞c1† ♜e3 45.♞f3!** is a nice win. **43...♞b3 44.♞xe5 ♙xe5 45.♞xe7** is a simple one. **43...♞b5 44.♞c1† ♞g5 45.♞c3! ♙e5 46.h4!!** is probably the most difficult of all the wins, but also the most attractive. **44.♞c1†! 44.♜e4!?** is also winning, but is a typical computer win, where just about every move seems to be possible. I'll stick with Moiseenko's way. **44...g5 45.♜e4!** White is slowly building up his attack. **45...♙d4 45...♞xe4 46.♞xb2** is simple. **46.♙d3 ♞a2 46...♜g6** loses to **47.♞xc6** as well as **47.h4**, based on **47...♜xh4 48.♞xc6† ♜g6 49.♞d7** with a mating attack. **47.♜g2** Taking it easy. Black cannot defend against the threats for long. **47...♜g6 47...c5 48.h4!** and wins. **48.♞xc6 g4 49.hxg4 ♙e3 50.♜g3 1–0**

33. Nepomniachtchi – Belov, Warsaw (rapid) 2011

In the game Nepomniachtchi went for the tempting **34.♞xh6†?** but after **34...♜xh6 35.♞g5† ♜h7 36.♙d4** Black had a defence: **36...♞e5! 37.fxe5 dxe5 38.♞xf5†** At this point Black returned the favour with an awful move: **38...♜g8? 39.♜e7† ♜g7 40.♞g6† ♜f8 41.♙c5?! (still winning, but 41.♜f5! would lead to mate almost immediately) 41...♜xc5 42.♞g8† ♜xe7 43.♞xb8** Black resigned on move 57. Instead **38...♜h8!** would have come close to directly saving the game. **39.♞h3† 39.♞h5† ♜g7! 40.♞g4† ♜h8 41.♞h3† ♜g8** does not improve things for White. **39...♜g8 40.♜e7† ♜f7 41.♞xd7 ♞e8 42.♞xe8† ♜xe8 43.♙c5 ♞a2±**

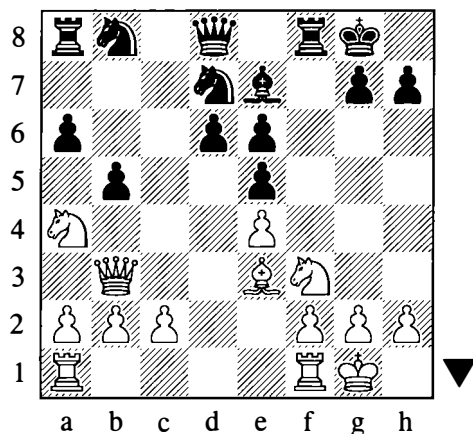
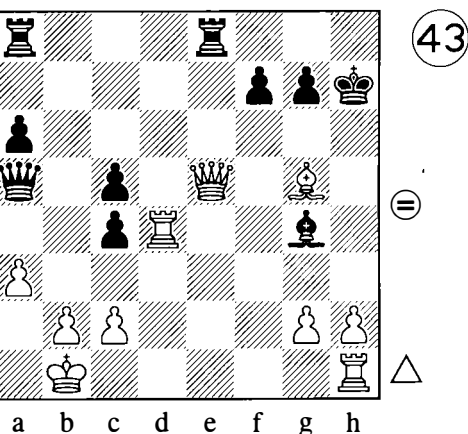
34.♙d4? would be great if it were not for **34...♞e2†! 35.♜xe2 ♞e8†** and **...♞xg6** wins.

The winning line is: **34.♞f6!! ♞g8 34...♜xf6 35.♜xf6† ♜h8 36.♞g6 35.♞f7† 35.♞h3 ♜xf6 36.♞xf5† ♞g6 37.♜xf6† ♜g7 38.♞d7† ♜f8 39.♞h7 ♞xf6 40.♞h8† ♜f7 41.♞xb8 ♙xf4±** should give Black decent drawing chances. **35...♞g7 35...♜h8 36.♞h3!** wins rather quickly. For example: **36...♞g6 37.♙d4† ♜e5 38.fxe5 dxe5 39.♜f6** and Black is mated. **36.♜e7!! ♞xf7 37.♞g6† ♜h8 38.♞xf7 ♜e5 39.♙d4!** Black faces mate in three.

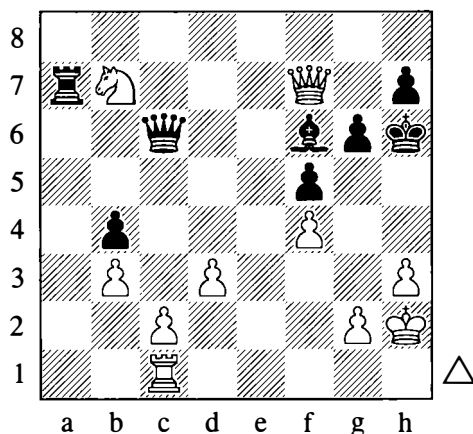
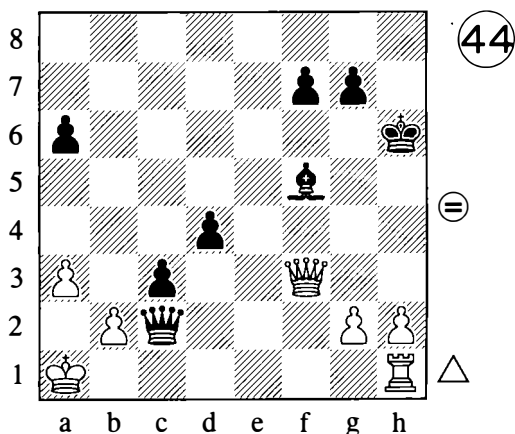
Polgar – Vachier-Lagrave, *Intermediate Moves***Kovanova – Grigorian, *Imagination*****Ostapenko – Jarcev, *Combinational Vision*****Li Chao – Akopian, *Imagination*****Inarkiev – Movsesian, *Combinational Vision*****Motylev – Melkumyan, *Imagination***

Kislik – Denisov, *Imagination*Janosevic – Baretic, *Elimination*

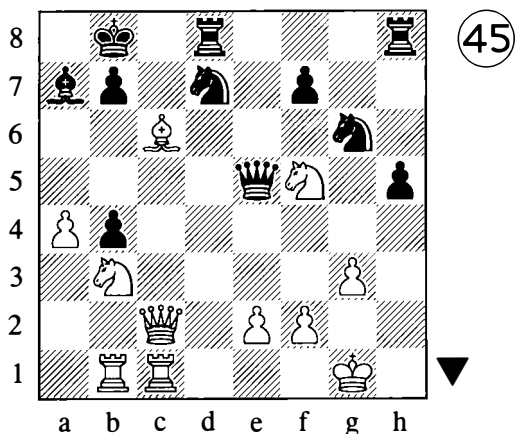
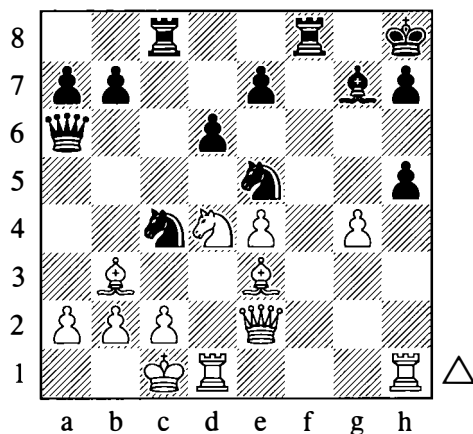
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Andreikin – Yandarbiev, *Candidate Moves*Janosevic – Baretic, *Elimination*

41

Short – McShane, *Prophylaxis*Carlsen – Wang Yue, *Elimination*

42



34. Polgar – Vachier-Lagrave, Hoogeveen 2011

This is a very difficult position, which is all about coordination. **25.fxe3!** The game went: 25.c4? Judit missed some tactical finesse (maybe her opponent's reply?) and lost all her advantage. 25...♙d3! 26.♖e2† ♚e3 27.♗c2 (27.fxe3 ♜xe3† 28.♝g1 ♜f8 gives White time to get the bishop out of the way, but not to avoid the perpetual: 29.♙f3 ♜d1† 30.♜h2 ♙g3† 31.♜g2 ♜e3†) 27...♜b4 28.♗d2 ♙xf2? (28...♙xb3±) 29.♗xf2 ♜d3 30.♗d2 f3? (30...♜d8±) 31.♙h2! ♖e5 32.♙d1 ♜f8 33.♙f2? (33.♙f5!+–) 33...♜xf2 34.♗xf2 ♖e4? (34...♙xb3±) 35.♗d2 ♜g8 36.♗xd6 g6 37.♗d8† ♜h7 38.♗f6? (38.♗d5 ♖f4 39.♙d3+–) 38...♙d3 39.♗xf7†?! (39.♗h4† ♜g7 40.♗e1±) 39...♜h6 40.♗f8† ♜h7 41.♙e1 ♙d1! 42.♗f7† ♜h6 43.♗f8† ♜h7 44.♗f7† ♜h6 And a draw was agreed. **25...fxe3** 25...♜xe3† 26.♜e2 leaves Black without a follow-up. **26.b4!!** This zwischenzug would have won the game quickly. 26.♙e1?! ♜f8 27.♗d1 ♙xe1 28.♗xe1 ♗xc2 also looks insufficient for Black, although the position is not so simple. **26...♗c4†** Black is losing his coordination and at the same time his compensation. 26...♗c6 27.♗g2 and 26...♜xb4 27.♗g2 d5 28.♙d1 should both win for White without great trouble, although it would take some time to get fully coordinated. **27.♗d3 ♖f4† 28.♜e2 ♖f2† 29.♜d1 ♜f4 30.♗xd6 f5 31.♜c1 fxg4 32.hxg4 e2 33.♜b2 ♙f6† 34.♜a2+–** White's king is reasonably secure and her rooks will soon enter the attack with great effect.

35. Kovanova – Grigorian, Moscow 2012

White's only problem is the poorly placed knight on h6. **28...♙dd6!!** 28...♙xc3? does not work. There is no reason for White to slow down her attack: 29.f5! ♙xe1 (after 29...♜xf5 30.gxf5 ♙xe1 31.♙xe1 ♙e8 32.♙g1!+– the black king is too fragile) 30.fxg6 hxg6 31.♙xe1 ♜e6 32.♙f1± and Black is in deep trouble. In the game Black played: 28...♜e6? This is just hopeless. 29.f5 ♜g5 30.♗h5 ♙g7 31.♙h4 ♜e8 1–0 **29.♙h4!** 29.exd6? ♗xd6 30.♜xf7 ♜xf7 31.♙g1 ♙h6 32.♙h4 White's position looks shaky, but where is the killer blow? Always include all the pieces in the attack! 32...♙a5!! and Black wins. **29...♙xh6 30.exd6 ♗xd6 31.♙e7†! ♜g8 32.♙xd6 ♙xh3† 33.♜g2 ♙xc3 34.♙xb4 ♙b3 35.♙c3 ♙xg4** Both players have their chances in this unbalanced position. The rook looks odd on b3, but if my PC is recommending 36.♙a3!?, it cannot be entirely silly!

36. Ostapenko – Jarcev, Soviet Union 1969

19.♙xg7†!! ♙xg7 20.♙g1 ♙fc8 The only serious move. White would play ♙d4 if Black was not threatening mate on c2. **21.♙xg7†!** This attack ensures that the black king cannot run away. 21.♙xe4? would be a disaster after 21...b3! 22.♗xh7† ♜f8 23.♙xg7, but only because of the surprising 23...♗a5!! with all kinds of threats: 24.♜d1 (24.♙d2 ♗b5 25.♙h6 ♗f1† 26.♜d2 ♗xf2† 27.♜d1 bxc2† 28.♙xc2 ♜e7 and Black has the stronger attack.) 24...bxc2† 25.♙xc2 ♗d5† 26.♙d3 ♗xa2 and once again Black's attack is stronger. **21...♜xg7 22.♗h6† ♜g8 23.♙xe4 b3!** The best defensive try. 23...♙c5 24.♙xh7† ♜h8 is a surprising difficult position for White to win. But after all he has sacrificed a lot of material. White has several ways to an advantage, but only one of them is fully convincing: 25.b3! (A disappointing line would be: 25.♙d4† ♙e5 26.♙xe5† dxe5 27.♙f5†?! ♜g8 28.♗h7† ♜f8 29.♙xe6 which fails because of 29...♗e8!=) 25...♗a5 (25...♗a3† 26.♜b1 ♙e5 27.♙e4† ♜g8 28.♙d4 ♙c8 29.f4 White wins. 25...♗d7 26.♙f5† ♜g8 27.♗h7† ♜f8 28.♗h8† ♜e7 29.♙g5† ends with mate.) 26.♙e4† ♜g8 27.♙d4 ♙e5 28.f4 ♙b8 29.fxe5 dxe5 30.♙h7† ♜h8 31.♙f5† ♜g8 32.♗g5† ♜f8 33.♙xe6 fxe6

34. ♖xe5 White wins. 24. ♖xh7+ ♜h8 25. ♖f5+ ♜g8 26. ♖h7+ ♜f8 27. ♖h6+ ♜e8 28. ♖g8+ ♜e7 28... ♜d7 would transpose to the next note after best play. 29. ♖g5+ ♜d7 30. ♖xf7+ ♜c6 31. ♖xe6 ♜b6 31... ♖e4 32. ♖d7+ ♜b6 33. ♖e3+ ♜a5 34. ♖xb3 with a winning position for White. For example: 34... ♖c6 35. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 36. ♖d5 ♖cc8 37. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 38. h4 and the endgame is winning if White shows good technique. 32. ♖e3+ ♜a5?! Losing instantly. But after 32... ♖c5 33. ♖d5! ♖b8 34. ♖e7 ♖b4 35. ♖xd6+ ♜a5 36. ♖xc5+ ♖xc5 37. ♖xc5 ♖b5 38. ♖e3 ♖xd5 39. axb3 White will win the endgame relatively easily anyway. 33. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 34. ♖f5+ ♖c5 35. ♖xc5 ♖b5 36. ♖b4+ ♜xb4 37. a3+ ♜c4 38. ♖xb5+ axb5 39. cxb3+ ♜d3 40. ♜d1 1-0

37. Li Chao – Akopian, Ningbo 2011

19... ♖d8! 19... ♖xf3?! is beautifully refuted with 20. ♖d6! e5 21. ♖d3 e4 22. ♖d6!±. And no better is 19... ♜h8? 20. ♖d6! e5 21. ♜e1 and White wins. 20. ♖b5 20.c6 ♖xd7 21.cxd7 ♖xf3 22.gxf3 ♜f8± was also possible, but the white pieces are not really playing. 20... ♖xf3 21.gxf3 ♖d5! In the game Black decided to go for a draw with: 21... ♖xf3? 22. ♖xa5 (22. ♖fc1?? ♖d2! 23. ♖f1 ♖d5 24. ♖c4 ♖g5+ 25. ♜f1 ♖g2+ 26. ♜e2 ♖e5+ 27. ♜d1 ♖xf2 and Black wins.) 22... ♖g4+ (22... ♖d5? no longer works. After 23. ♖c7!± e5? 24. ♖c8+ ♜g7 25. ♜b4 White is ready with ♖a3 next.) 23. ♜h1 ♖f3+ 24. ♜g1 ♖g4+ 25. ♜h1 ♖f3+ 26. ♜g1 ♖g4+ 22. ♖fd1 22.h4 ♖c7! 23. ♖fd1 ♖h2+ 24. ♜f1 ♖e5! and White is mated. 22... ♖g5+ 23. ♜f1 ♖xf3 24. ♖d3 24.b4 ♖f5! 25. ♖d2 ♖c7 gives Black a winning attack. The immediate threat is ... ♖h1+ and ... ♖xa1. 24... ♖h1+ 25. ♜e2 ♖xa1 26. ♖xa5 ♖xa2 Black has every chance of winning, with his extra pawn and better placed king.

38. Inarkiev – Movsesian, Olginka 2011

30. ♖e5!! After 30. ♖xd5? ♖xb4 White has nothing better than taking a draw, which is what he did in the game: 31. ♖xf7+ ♖cxf7 32. ♖g6+ ♖g7 33. ♖e6+ ♜h8 34. ♖h6+ ♜g8 35. ♖e6+ ♜h8 30... ♖b5 30... ♖xb4 31. ♖xc7 ♖b1+ 32. ♜e2 ♖e8+ 33. ♜f3 ♖h1+ 34. ♜g3 ♖g1+ 35. ♖g2 ♖e1+ 36. ♖df2 fxe6 37. ♜h2 and White wins. 30... ♖c3 is met with a similar combination to the main line: 31. ♖h7+ ♜xh7 32. ♖xf7+!! ♖cxf7 33. g6+ ♜h6 34. ♖g5+ ♜g7 35. gxf7+ ♜xf7 36. ♖xd5+ ♜g7 37. ♖g2+ and White wins. 30... ♖e8 31. ♖h7+ ♜xh7 32. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 33. g6+ also wins. 31. ♖h7+! ♜xh7 32. g6+!! 32. ♖xf7+? ♖cxf7 33. g6+ ♜g8 34. gxf7+ ♖xf7 does not win for White here. He only has a perpetual check. 32... ♜g8 33. gxf7+ ♖xf7 33... ♖cxf7 34. ♖g2+ ♜h7 35. ♖xh5# 34. ♖g2+ ♖g7 34... ♜f8 35. ♖h8+ ♜e7 36. ♖de2+! also leads to mate: 36... ♖xe2+ 37. ♖xe2+ ♜d6 38. ♖h6+ ♜d7 39. ♖e6+ ♜d8 40. ♖e8# 35. ♖xd5+ Exchanging the rooks first also works, but this is cleaner. 35... ♖cf7 36. ♖xg7+ ♜xg7 37. ♖g2+ ♜f8 38. ♖d8+ ♖e8 39. ♖d6+ ♖e7 40. ♖h6+ ♜f7 41. ♖g6+ ♜f8 42. ♖g8#

39. Motylev – Melkumyan, Aix-les-Bains 2011

White had a nice winning chance here. Mate! 40. ♖e6!! The game went 40. ♖d4 ♖xd4 41. ♖xd4 ♜g8 42. b5 ♖c3±... and was eventually drawn. 40... ♖xb4 40... ♖a7 41. b5 ♖c5 does not work either. After 42. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 43. b6 ♖b5 44. ♖e8 White wins a piece. 40... ♖d8 would lose quickly to 41. ♖e4!, when the b-pawn dominates. 41. ♖e5! 41. ♖d7?! is weaker although not harmless. The best defence is: 41... ♖c5 (41... ♖c4 42. ♖f7! ♖c5 43. ♖e5+–) 42. ♖f7! ♖g5! (42... ♖d8 43. ♖e5 ♜h7 44. ♖f5+ ♜g8 45. ♖xh6) 43. ♖f4 ♖h4 44. ♖xh6+ ♖xh6! 45. ♖xh6 gxh6± I think this might be a fortress and therefore a draw. 41... ♜h7 41... ♖h4 42. ♖b7 (42. ♖g6 and 43. ♖e6

also wins) 42...♙d8 43.♙g6 and wins. **42.♙d3!** 42.♙f3? ♗c4 43.♙f5+ ♕g8 44.♙xh6 works equally well. **42...♕g8 43.♙xh6!** The thematic point of the exercise. White wins. For example: **43...♙b7 44.♙h7+ ♕f7 45.♙g6+ ♕g8 46.♙e6+ ♙f7 47.♙h8+**

40. Kislik – Denisov, Budapest 2009

Black played an excellent game until he decided not to win it! **13...bxa4! 14.♙b7 ♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♙g5 16.♙xg5** 16.f4?! does not improve things. Black has the initiative after 16...exf4 17.♙d4 f3 18.♕h1 ♖c6 19.♙xc6 ♙f4 20.♙g1 ♖e5 21.♙b7 g6+. **16...♙xg5+ 17.♕h1 ♙d8!!** The point. The rook is not hanging. **18.♙ad1** 18.♙xa8? ♙c7+ **18...♖b6 19.♙g1 ♖d8** 19...g6!? was maybe better. It's hard to tell. **20.♙xd6 ♙b8 21.♙a7?!** Better was 21.♙c6 ♙c8 22.♙b7 ♙c7, although Black is likely to win the endgame. **21...♙a8?** For some reason Black decided to force a draw. Maybe his opponent's 200 extra rating points scared him? After 21...♙c8!+ the white queen was trapped! **22.♙b7 ♙b8 23.♙a7 ♙a8 ½–½**

41. Andreikin – Yandarbiev, Moscow 2012

38.♙f8! The game went: 38.♖d8? ♙d6 39.♙f1 ♙a1?? (39...♙d7! 40.♖b7 ♙d4 41.♙f8+ ♙g7 42.♙c8 ♙d5 43.♖a5 ♙e7 44.♖c6 ♙e2 45.♙g1 ♙d6 46.♙f1 ♙xc2 47.♙d8 ♙xd8 48.♖xd8+) 40.♖e6 ♙xf1 41.♙xf6 1–0 **38...♙g7** 38...♕h5 39.♙g1! with winning threats. **39.♙d8! ♙b2** 39...♙f6 40.♙d6 leads to a winning ending for White. I have very long analysis, but like the cricket commentator said: "I do not want to bore you with the details..." 40...♙xd6 41.♖xd6 ♙e7 42.g4!? ♙e2+ 43.♕g3 ♙b2 44.♙d1 ♙xc2 45.gxf5 gxf5 46.♖xf5+ ♕g6 47.♖d6 ♙c3 48.♕f3 White wins. For example: 48...♙xb3 49.♙g1+ ♕f6 50.♖e4+ ♕f7 51.♙b1 ♙xd3+ 52.♕e2 ♙d4 53.♕e3+ **40.♖d6!!** This is the important point of everything White has been doing. The threat of ♖xf5+ is immense. **40...♙d7** The only move. **41.♙xd7 ♙xd7 42.♙b1 ♙g7 43.♖c4 ♙e7 44.♙d1** White wins.

42. Short – McShane, London 2010

This position is ripe with tricks White has to avoid. But if he keeps his focus on the kingside it will all work out well. **22.♙xh5!** Short rejected this move on account of some of the tricks below, but instead he was instantly worse: 22.g5? ♖g4! 23.♙g1 ♖ce3!+ Black's position is already a bit more pleasant. True to form, McShane won the game in 52 moves. If White wanted to play safe, then 22.gxh5± would have been a better choice. **22...♖xe3** 22...♖f3 is not such a good idea. White can play something simple like 23.c3 and enjoy a great position. But strongest is probably: 23.g5 ♖xe3 24.g6! (24.♙xe3± is of course also possible) 24...d5! The only way to complicate matters. (24...h6 25.♙xe3 is immediately over) 25.♙xh7+ ♕g8 26.♙xe3 ♖xd4 27.♙xd5+ e6 28.♙xg7+ ♕xg7 29.♙xd4+ e5 (29...♙f6 30.♙xb7 ♙xb7 31.♙h1 ♙c7 32.♙h7+ ♕xg6 33.♙xc7 ♙xc7 34.b3 also wins for White) 30.♙xe5+ ♙f6 31.♙h5 ♙f4+ 32.♕b1 ♙h8 33.♙e2 White wins, but not immediately. **23.♙h2!** This move was not on Short's radar. Instead he found some obstacles after 23.♙xe3? ♙f1, when Black has resources against all White's active options: 24.♙h1 (24.♙xh7+ ♕xh7 25.♙h3+ ♙h6+ 26.g5 ♖d3+! and Black wins everything) Again the d3-square. White is lost after: 24...♙d3!! 25.♙d2 ♙xh1 26.♙xh1 ♙xe4 with total domination. For example: 27.♙f1 ♖d3+ 28.♕b1 ♖xb2! **23...♖d5c4** 23...♙c4 is not much of a defence: 24.♙xh7+ ♕g8 25.♙h1 Other moves win as well, but one is enough.

25...♘g6 26.♙f5 ♖xf5 27.gxf5 ♙f8 28.♖xg7 ♗xg7 29.♖h6 ♗f7 30.♖xe3 White wins. **24.♖h1!** The most accurate, although 24.♖xh7 ♗g8 25.♖h1! also wins as we shall see below. **24...♗g8** 24...♙xd4 25.♖xh7 ♗g8 26.♖h5! and Black is mated. **25.♖g5!!** Freeing the h-file for the queen and attacking g7 at the same time. 25.♖xh7? d5 does win for White: 26.♙xc4 ♖xc4 27.♖xg7 ♗xg7 28.♖h7 ♗f6 29.♖h6 ♗e5 30.♖xa6 ♗xd4 (30...bxa6 31.c3 and wins) 31.♖g7 ♗e5 32.c3 ♗d3 33.♖xf8 bxa6 34.♖d6 **25...♖f1 ♗xf1 ♙xf1 27.♖h6 ♗f8 28.♖xg7** White wins.

43. Janosevic – Baretic, Yugoslavia 1977

White played a very natural move, but must have failed to understand that being an exchange up does not matter much when your king's position comes under heavy pressure. **21.♙e7? ♖xe7!** Not a difficult move to foresee. What else should Black play? **22.♖xe7 cxd4 23.♖e4** Janosevic must have stopped around here in his evaluation of the position, not realizing that things were just about to get seriously dangerous: **23...♙f5 24.♖xa8 ♖d2! 25.♖d8!** The best attempt. 25.♖c1? d3! is an important point; Black wins material. **25...♖xc2 ♗a1 c3?** Black should not allow all these checks. 26...♖f2! was stronger when White is in for a lot of suffering. **27.♖h4 ♗g6 28.♖g3 ♗h5 29.♖f3 ♗h6** We have reached the next exercise.

White had to instead find a fantastic draw with: **21.♖d5 ♖e1 ♗a2!** The first slightly surprising move. White probably just looked at 22.♖xe1 ♖xe1 23.♙c1 cxd4 24.♖xa8 d3, which is no joy. 22.♙c1? cxd4 23.♖xa5 ♖xh1 looks very dangerous for White as well. 24.♖g5 d3! 25.♗a2 ♙e6 and Black has serious winning chances. **22...♖xh1 23.♖xg4 ♖e1** It seems that the first tactic has just lead to a back rank attack. But actually White has a second delaying action on the first rank, securing himself the time he needs to fight back. **24.♙c1!! ♖b8!** 24...♖xc1? would actually lose directly! 25.♖h4 ♗g6 26.♖e4 f5 27.♖g4 and Black has no good moves. **25.♖g5 g6 26.♖h6 ♗g8** and here **27.♖xg6** leads to a perpetual check.

44. Janosevic – Baretic, Yugoslavia 1977

30.♖f4 ♗b7? ♙e6 31.♖b4 a5 32.♖b8 ♗h7 and White has no counterplay against the advancing d-pawn. **30...g5! 31.♖c1!?** White could fight a bit more with: 31.♖b8 ♖xg2 32.♖e1 But Black is winning all the same. 32...♙e6 Black is threatening ...♗h7!, when all checks and counterplay would cease to exist. Therefore White has to do something now; unfortunately there is nothing he really can do. 33.♖xe6 ♗h7 (33.♖h8 ♗g6 34.♖g8 ♗f5+) 33...fxe6 34.♖f8 ♗h5 35.bxc3 dxc3 36.♖h8 ♗g4 37.♖xc3 ♖h1 38.♗a2 ♖xh2+ **31...♖xg2?** Black misses a chance to win directly with 31...♖xc1 ♗! 32.♖xc1 c2. **32.♖d1!** After 32.bxc3 ♙e6 33.♖b1 dxc3 34.♖c1 White would have been able to fight on in a probably lost, but at least very complicated, position. **32...♙e6 33.h4 cxb2 34.♖xb2 ♖xb2 35.♗xb2 gxh4 36.♖xd4 ♗g5 37.♗c3 h3 38.♖d8 ♙g4 0-1**

Correct was **30.bxc3!** when White holds in all lines: a) 30...dxc3 31.♖f4 g5 The only reasonable try. (31...♗g6 32.♖g3 ♗f6 33.♖h4 does not give Black a chance to escape the checks) 32.♖c1! ♖b3 33.h4!= b) 30...♙e6 31.c4 ♖xc4 32.♖f4 g5 33.♖d2!= An improvement over Rajkovic's excellent pre-computer analysis. The position is holdable for White – especially if you are a computer.

45. Carlsen – Wang Yue, Nanjing 2009

23...♖c8? 24.♞d3! bxc6 24...♙xc6 25.♙xc6 bxc6 26.♞xd7 ♞c7 27.♞d3 h4! with equal chances in this mess. **25.♞xd7 ♙c7 26.♞d3♙ h4 27.♜bd4 hxg3** 27...c5!? was better, but White should still be favoured ever so slightly after: 28.♜f3 ♞e6 29.♜3xh4 ♙d7 30.♞f3 ♜e5 31.♞f4± **28.♙xb4† ♜a8 29.♜xg3±** White won on move 69... **1–0**

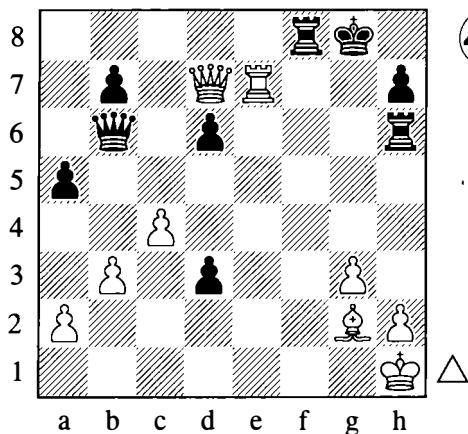
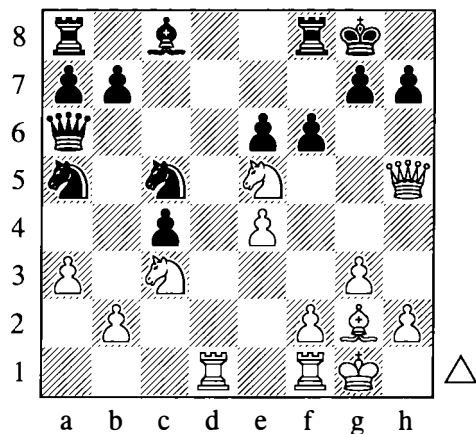
23...bxc6? loses to a fine attack: 24.♜bd4! (24.♜fd4? never works. Here Black has 24...♜e7 if nothing else.) 24...♙xd4 25.♙xb4† ♙b6 26.♞xc6 ♜a7 27.a5! ♞xa5 28.♜d6 White has too many threats to count.

23...h4!? 24.♜bd4 can either lead to hugely unclear complications after 24...hxg3 25.♙xb4 or directly to a draw with: 24...♙xd4 25.♜xd4 ♞xd4 26.♙xb7 ♜xb7 27.♞c7† ♜a8 28.♞a5† and so on.

Black could have refuted White's attack with: **23...♜e7! 24.♜bd4** 24.♜xe7 ♞xg3† is a complete disaster. **24...♙xd4 25.♙xb4** 25.♜xd4?! ♞xd4 26.♙xb7? does not lead to anything at this point. After 26...♜xb7 27.♞c7† ♜a8 28.♞a5† Black has 28...♞a7. **25...♜xc6 26.♞xc6 ♙b6! 27.♞f3** 27.♙xb6? ♜xb6 28.♞xb6 ♞xf5 and White lacks a follow-up. **27...♙he8 28.e3 ♙e6** Black has consolidated his position and will not be mated. If he can translate the extra piece into a full point, only time will tell.

Korobov – Vocaturo, *Intermediate Moves*Acosta – Marrero Lopez, *Imagination*

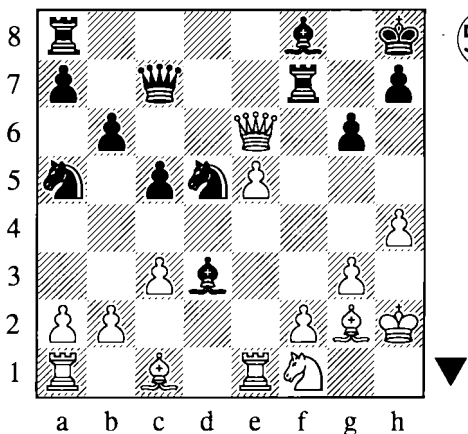
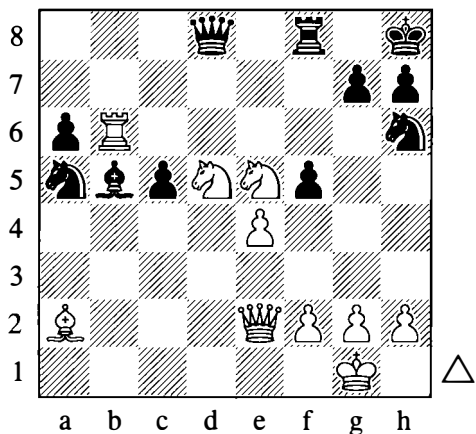
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Ni Hua – Zhrebukh, *Imagination*Teterev – Bakin, *Prophylaxis*

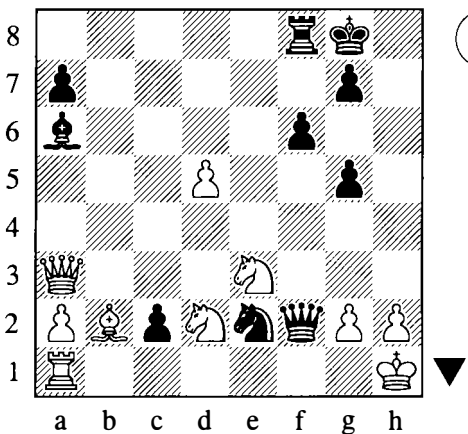
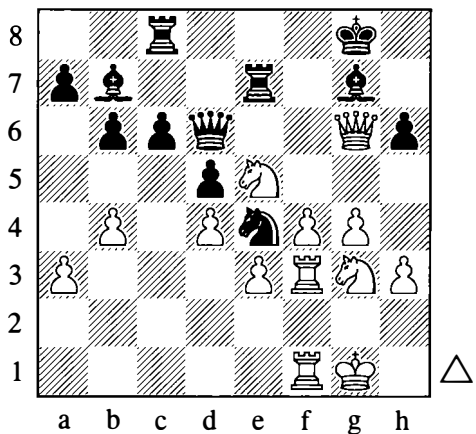
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Justo – Sakaev, *Imagination*Stoeri – Korchnoi, *Intermediate Moves*

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46. Korobov – Vocaturo, Moscow 2011

18.♔d8!! One of the most impressive moves of recent times. **18...fxe5!** The best fighting chance. 18...♔xd8 19.♖f7 ♕h8 20.♗e7 This leads to a fairly straightforward attack. 20...♗b6 (20...♕c6 21.♕xc6 ♖g8 22.♕d8! with various threats beyond just ♕f7#, for example: 22...h6 23.♕f7 ♕h7 24.e5! Even better than taking the knight immediately. 24...f5 25.♗xc5 is winning.) 21.♕f7 ♕g8 22.♕xd8 h6 23.e5! Again a small improvement. 23...f5 24.♗e8 ♕h7 25.♕f7 ♗c7 26.♕f3 ♖b8 27.♗h8 ♕g6 28.♕h5 ♕xh5 29.♗xg7 Black is mated. **19.♖xf8 ♕xh8 20.f4 ♕e7!** 20...♕d7 21.♕d5!! exd5 (21...♕f6 22.fxe5 exd5 23.exf6 gxf6 24.♗h6 ♕f7 25.♗xh7 ♕f8 26.e5 f5 27.♕xd5+–) 22.fxe5 ♕e7 23.exd5 ♗b6! The last try, hoping that White will react incorrectly to this clear-cut decision: 24.♖f2!! ♗g6 25.♗h4 ♕e8 (25...♕f6 26.d6 ♕e6 27.exf6 gives White a deadly attack.) 26.d6 ♗e6 27.♕d5! Here it is vital that the king is not on h1 and the bishop therefore not being taken with check. 27...♗xe5 28.♕f7 ♕f8 29.♗d8 ♗e8 30.♗xe8#; 20...♕d7 21.fxe5 ♕e7 22.♗g5 ♕e8 23.♗xg7 ♕d8 24.♗f8 ♕e8 25.♗xc5+– **21.♗xe5!** This would have been the winning move. In the game White erred with 21.fxe5? ♕d8!∞, but still won on move 55. **21...♕d3** 21...♕e8 22.♗xg7 ♗b6 23.♕h1 This would also have given White a winning attack. 23...♕d3 (23...♗xb2 24.f5!) 24.♕f3 ♕d7 (24...♕d8 25.f5! with a winning attack) 25.f5 ♕d8 26.♕h5 ♖c8 27.♕f7 ♖c6 (27...exf5 28.♕d5 is mate) 28.♗f8 ♕c7 29.fxe6 Black has no reply. **22.♗xg7 ♕e8 23.h3!** White has a winning attack. **23...♗d6 24.f5 exf5 25.exf5 ♗f8 26.f6! ♕e6 27.♕d5! ♕f7 28.♕b5** White wins.

47. Ni Hua – Zharebukh, Chennai 2011

White has a great advantage after something like 29.♗d2, but much stronger is the combination Ni Hua came up with in the game. **29.♖xh6!! ♗g5!** 29...♕xe2 just allows mate: 30.♕g6 ♕g8 31.♕de7# **30.♗e3!** 30.♗c2! transposes. **30...♗xh6** There is a long variation after the toughest defence: 30...gxf6 31.♗xc5 ♗g7 32.♕f4! White is winning here, but it takes a magician to foresee this fact. 32...♕b7 (32...♕c6 33.♕e6 ♗f6 34.♕xf8 ♕xe5 looks less clear, but White has a nice attack: 35.♗c8 ♗c6 36.♕g6 ♕g7 37.♗f8 and wins everything with check.) 33.♗c3! The immediate threat is ♕h5. (33.♗d4! also works, but we only need one win.) 33...♖e8 34.♕f7 ♕g8 35.♕xh6 ♕f8 36.♗a3 ♗e7 37.♕e6# A glorious line. **31.♗xc5 g6 32.♕f4!!** A magnificent move; Black cannot defend against the many threats. The combination is almost positional in the way it has forced Black to weaken the dark squares around his king. 32.♗c3 could be met by: 32...♗g7 33.♕f4 ♕c4! **32...fxe4 33.♗c3** Other moves win as well. **33...♗g7 34.♕e6 e3 34...♗f6 35.♕xf8 35.♕xg6 1–0**

48. Justo – Sakaev, Plovdiv 2010

30.♕f5 ♗e6 31.g5!! In the game White played the inferior 31.♕xh6? ♕f8 32.f5? when after 32...♗f6 Black was already okay and eventually won on move 42. Instead of 32.f5 White should have played 32.♕f5!± with strong compensation. However, it is far less convincing than the main line. **31...h5** After both 31...♖ce8 32.♕xe7 ♖xe7 33.gxf6 and 31...hxf5 32.♕h6 ♕h8 (32...♕f8 33.fxf5 and Black is mated) 33.♕ef7 White has won a lot of material. **32.♕h6 ♕f8 33.f5 ♗xg6 34.♕xg6 ♕e8 35.♕xe7 ♕xg5 36.♕xc8 ♕xc8 37.♕g8!** White wins. The knight is not trapped.

49. Acosta – Marrero Lopez, El Sauzal 2010

32. ♖g4† 32. ♖e8? with the beautiful point of 32... ♜hf6 33. ♙d5† ♘h8 34. ♙e4!!+– does not win on account of 32... ♜f2!! when it is Black who wins. **32... ♜g6** **33. ♖h4!** White has an alternative win in 33. ♙d5† ♘h8 34. ♜xh7† ♘h7 35. ♖h4†! ♜h6 36. ♖e7† ♘g6 37. ♖xf8, when Black cannot defend his queen. For example 37... ♜d4 38. ♖f7† ♘g5 39. h4† winning the rook. 33. ♖d7? was played in the game and a draw was apparently agreed. Odd, as 33... ♜d4 just wins. **33... ♜g7** 33... h6 is refuted by: 34. ♖e4 d5 (34... ♜g7 35. ♖e6†!) 35. ♖xd5† ♘h8 36. ♖d7 ♜c5 37. ♜h7† ♘g8 38. ♙d5† ♖xd5† 39. ♖xd5†! ♘h7 40. ♖xb7† ♘h8 41. ♖d5 And the endgame is winning for White. **34. ♙d5† ♘h8** **35. ♖f6!!** A glorious move. **35... ♜fg8** **36. ♖xg7† ♜xg7** **37. ♜e8† ♜g8** **38. ♜xg8#**

50. Teterov – Bakin, Minsk 2010

White has sacrificed a piece and believed he would win it back with interest. He did so in the game, but that was just luck. The game went: **22... ♜e7?** What is the point of this? **23. ♖xd5 ♜d8** **24. ♖f3 ♜xe5** **25. ♙g5 ♜xe1** **26. ♜xe1 1–0**

Better but not best would have been a calm move like 22... ♙g7?! when White has no advantage: 23. ♜d1! ♘c4 24. ♖xd5 ♜d8 25. ♖e6 ♜xf2 26. ♙g5 ♜df8 27. ♜d2 ♖xe5= **22... ♜xf2!** This was obviously the right move. **23. ♖xd5 ♜d8** Riding the tempo-wave. 23... ♙a6?! 24. ♙e3! ♙b7 25. ♖xb7 ♘xb7 26. ♙xf2+ **24. ♖e6 ♙f5** **25. ♖f6† ♙g7** **26. ♖g5** Black is clearly doing quite well here. But the game would only have to last one more move: **26... ♜d3!!**+ threatening ...h6 and ...♜c6.

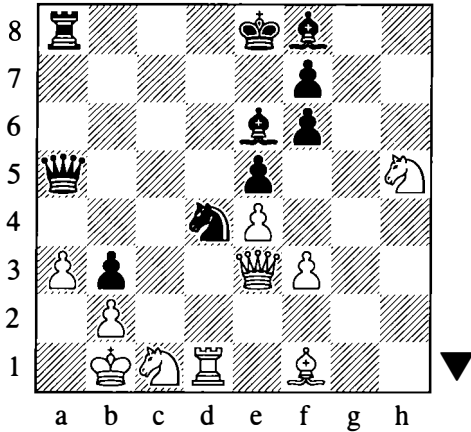
51. Stoeri – Korchnoi, Leukerbad 2011

The game concluded: **30... c1=♖†** **31. ♜xc1 ♘xc1** **32. ♖xa6 ♜e8** Best play was now: 33. ♖f1! ♖xe3 (After 33... ♖xf1† 34. ♘dxf1 ♘xa2 it is very debateable if Black has any advantage at all. Probably not is my guess, though White's position is harder to play.) 34. ♙xc1 ♖e5 35. ♘f3 ♖xd5 36. h3 ♖xa2+. Instead he played: **33. ♘ef1?? ♘e2** **34. ♘f3 ♖xf1† 0–1**

Correct was: **30... ♜e8!!** This is a very difficult move to find. Black is basically waiting for White to get out of the way of his attack. **31. ♘xc2** 31. ♖xa6 ♖xe3! 32. ♘c4 ♖f2 33. ♖c6 ♜e4+– and White is lost. There is the threat of ...♜h4! and after 34. h3 Black finally wins with 34... c1=♖† 35. ♜xc1 ♘xc1 36. ♙xc1 ♖f1† 37. ♘h2 ♖xc4!. **31... ♘f4** **32. ♜g1 ♖xd2** **33. ♖xa6 ♖xc2** **34. ♖c6!?** 34. ♙a3 ♜e1! and wins. **34... ♜e2** Black wins this endgame easily.

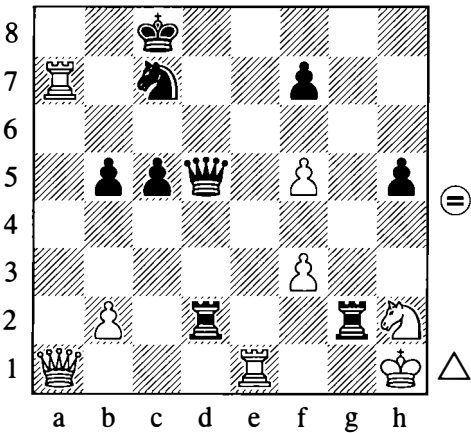
Andreev – Panarin, *Combinational Vision*

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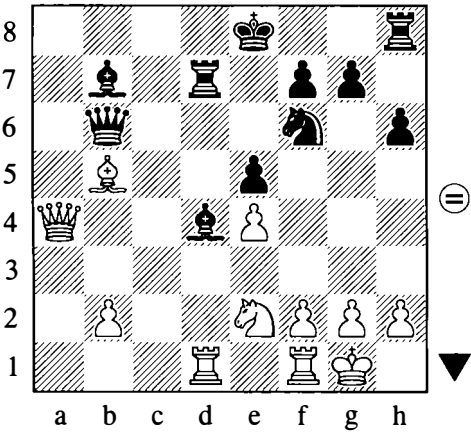
Smeets – I. Sokolov, *Intermediate Moves*

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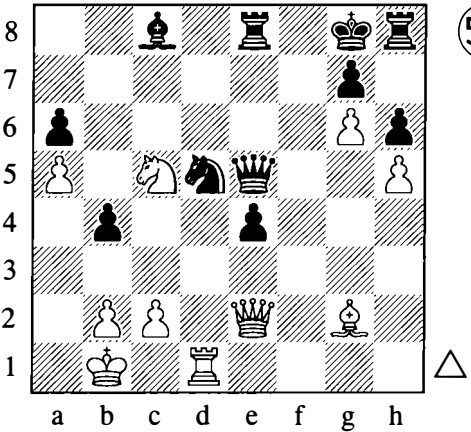
Aagaard – Bryson, *Intermediate Moves*

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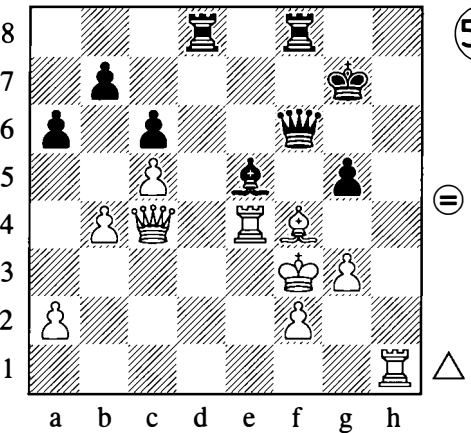
Miroshnichenko – Nyzhnyk, *Prophylaxis*

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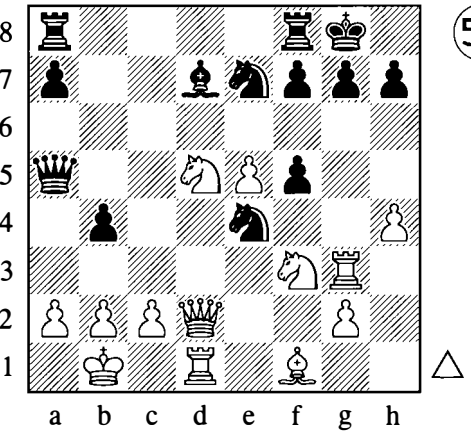
Bukavshin – Kovalenko, *Elimination*

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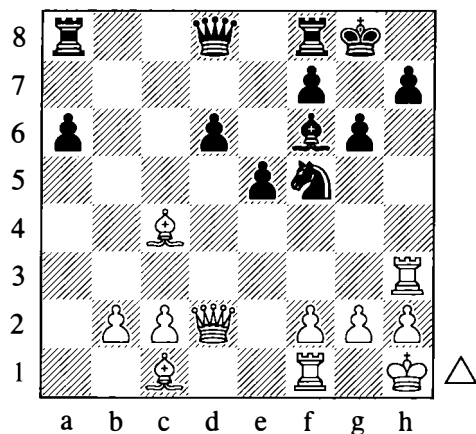
Munguntuul – Danielian, *Intermediate Moves*

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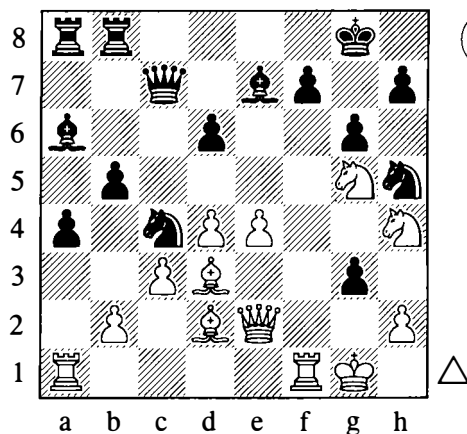


Kasparov – Anand, *Imagination*Polgar – Gelfand, *Combinational Vision*

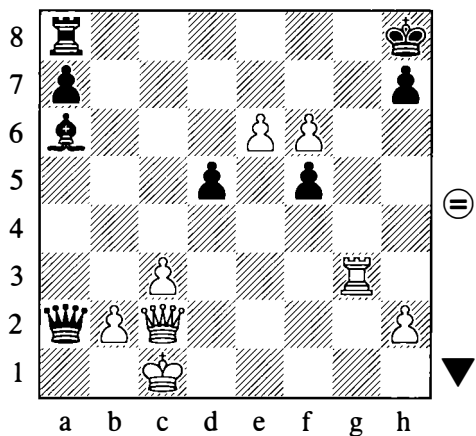
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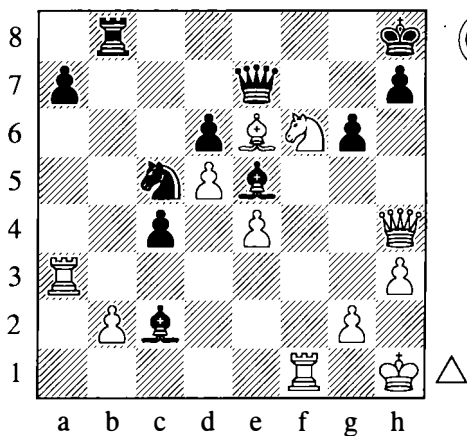
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Nabaty – Thejkumar, *Imagination*Mastrovasilis – Ivanchuk, *Imagination*

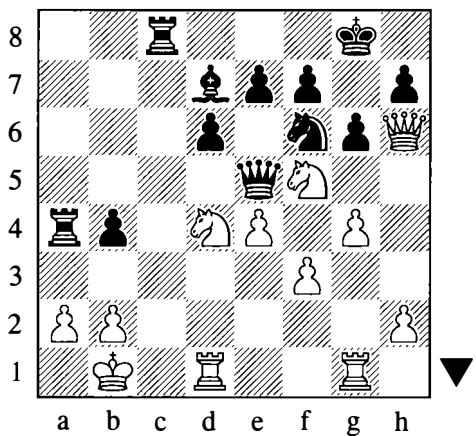
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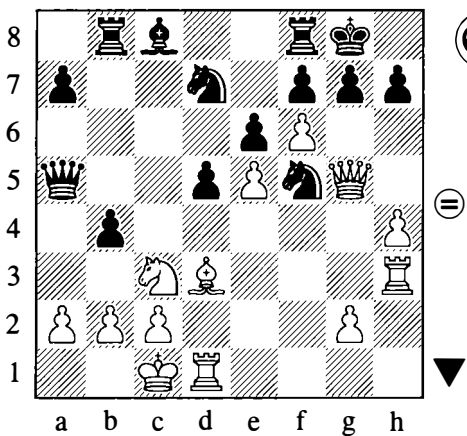
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Annaberdiev – Bu Xiangzhi, *Combinational Vision*Shirov – Grachev, *Elimination/Imagination*

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52. Andreev – Panarin, Bykova 2006

25...♙xa3!! 26.bxa3 ♖c5 27.♞d2 ♞xa3 27...♗e7 looks odd, but the attack is very strong. White might try **28.♗xf6!?**, when the best move **28...♞xa3** sort of transposes. **28.♗xf6† ♕d8 28...♗e7! 29.♗g8† ♕d6** was slightly stronger. **29.♗e2** In practice this is the most testing move, but Black was ready for it. Lengthier resistance might have been provided by **29.♞xd4† exd4 30.♞d2**, but Black wins with either **30...♞c3** or **30...b2!** **31.♞xb2 ♞xf3. 29...♞c2†!! 29...b2 30.♞xd4† exd4 31.♞xd4† ♞xd4 32.♗xd4 ♞a1† 33.♗xb2 ♞xf1 34.♗c3** gives White excellent drawing chances. **30.♞xc2 bxc2† 31.♗c1 ♞xe3 32.♗xd4 exd4 33.♗xc2 ♞xf3 0–1**

53. Smeets – I. Sokolov, Hoogeveen 2008

White could still have saved the game. **33.♗f1!** This looks very dangerous, but it works. In time trouble White missed this last chance and lost after: **33.♞xc7† ♗xc7 34.♞a7† ♕d6 35.♞b8† ♕c6 36.♞a8† ♕b6 37.♞xd5 ♞xh2† 38.♗g1 ♞xd5 39.♗xh2 ♞xf5 40.♗g3 c4 0–1** **33...♞de2** Black has a lot of possible moves, but none of them avoids the draw. **33...♞xf3 34.♞xc7† ♕d8 35.♞c8†! ♗xc8 36.♞a6† ♕c7 37.♞a7†** and White escapes with a perpetual after **37...♕d6 38.♞b8†. 33...♞d6 34.♞xc7† ♗xc7 35.♞a7†** with a draw. **34.♞d1! ♞c6!?** The only winning attempt. **34...♞xf3??** would now fail to **35.♞xc7† ♗xc7 36.♞a5†** and Black is mated. Or **34...♞e5 35.♞xc7†** with perpetual check. **35.♞xc7†!?** This works very neatly. Perhaps a simpler draw is **35.♞a5! ♞g8 36.♞xc7† ♞xc7 37.♞a8† ♞b8 38.♞c6†**, but I like the main line too much not to include it. **35...♗xc7 36.♞a5† ♕b7! 37.♞d8** This might look winning, but Black draws: **37...♞g8!! 38.♞a8† ♕b6 39.♞xg8! 39.♞xc6†?! ♗xc6 40.♞xg8 ♞xb2** looks very risky. **39...♞xa8 40.♞xa8 c4 41.♞c8 ♞xb2 42.♗e3 ♕b7 43.♞c5** With a draw.

54. Aagaard – Bryson, Glasgow 2012

21...♗xf2†! The game was eventually drawn, but was unpleasant for Black for a while after **21...♕d8? 22.♗xd7 ♗xd7 23.♗xd4 exd4 24.♞xd4±. 22.♞xf2 0–0 23.♗xd7 ♗xe4 24.♞df1 ♗xf2 25.♞xf2** It might look as if Black has nothing after **25...♞a8!** (a great intermediate move) **26.♞d1**, but actually he has **26...♞d8** forcing White to repeat the position with **27.♞a4**.

55. Miroshnichenko – Nyzhnyk, Reykjavik 2011

31.♞c4? was well refuted by Nyzhnyk in the game: **31...♞xh5! 32.♞xd5 ♞xg6 33.♗xe4?!** When you make one mistake others often follow. Better was **33.♞e5† ♕f8 34.♞xe8† ♗xe8 35.♗xe4 ♞f6**, when White can still fight. **33...♞xe4 34.♗xe4? 34.♞xe4 ♞xe4 35.♗xe4 ♕f7** was close to lost as well, but deserved a go. **34...♗e6 35.♗c5 0–1**

The solution was: **31.♗xe4! ♗f6 31...♗f4 32.♞c4† ♗e6 33.♗xe6 ♞xe6 (33...♗xe6 34.♗d5 is obviously hopeless.) 34.♞c7!** would also be winning for White. One line goes: **34...♞f8 35.♞d7 ♞h7 36.gxh7† ♕h8 37.♞xf4! 32.♞c4† ♗e6 33.♗xe6 ♞xe6** During the game White certainly disregarded this as a serious option quite quickly. White is a rook down and facing further exchanges. However, after **34.♗d5 ♗xd5 35.♞xd5** Black is seriously running out of moves. **35...♞f8** The only move. **35...♗f8 36.♞f4† ♕g8 37.♞e5!** would have won instantly. **37...♞d7 (37...♞f8 38.♞xf8† ♗xf8 39.♞xe6 b3 40.c4 and Black is going down in the most humiliating way.) 38.♞d4! Black is mated. 36.b3** White has all the time in the world. First of all the king is placed in safety. **36...♞h7 36...♞e8 37.♞d8!** with mate-in-two to follow. **37.♗a2!** This has a feeling of triangulation about it. **37...♞h8 37...♗h8** is most easily disposed of by **38.♞d8! ♞f5 39.♞xf8† ♞xf8 40.♞xa6** and the a-pawn kills. **38.♞d3!** White is winning in several ways here. The following is my favourite as it does not involve taking the rook on h7.

38...♖c8 38...♗e8 39.♙d8! with mate to follow. 39.♙d6 ♖c5 40.♙b1! Zugzwang and triangulation in one! 40...♗g1† 41.♙b2 ♖c5 42.♗e4! ♖c3† 43.♙a2 ♖h7 44.♙c6! ♖h3 Otherwise ♙c8 comes. 45.♙e6! ♖c3 46.♙e8 ♖c5 47.♗e6† ♙h8 48.♙xf8† ♖xf8 49.♖xa6 White wins. The a-pawn cannot be stopped.

56. Bukavshin – Kovalenko, Samara 2011

36.♖h5? ♙d5! White is lost. Black has managed to coordinate his forces and will strike on the next move. 37.♗e2 37.♙e2 gxf4 38.gxf4 ♙xf4 39.♙xd5 cxd5 40.♖xd5 ♙g5 and Black has every chance of converting his advantage into a full point. 37...♙xf4 38.♙e6 ♖f5 39.♙g2 ♙d2 40.♖c4 ♙f2† 41.♙xf2 ♙c1† 42.♙g1 ♖f2† 43.♙h1 ♖f3† 44.♙g1 ♖xg3† 45.♙h1 ♖f3† 46.♙g1 ♙e3† 0-1

36.♗he1? ♙d5 37.♗e2 fails to 37...♙c3!. For example: 38.♖h1 gxf4 39.gxf4 ♙fd8 and Black wins.

36.♙g1? is also met with 36...♙d5!. For example 37.♙e2 ♙b8 and White is under serious pressure.

White had to find a brilliant defensive idea: 36.♙e2!! gxf4 36...♙b2 37.♙e6 ♖f5 38.♙e7† ♙g6 39.♙e6† is a draw by perpetual, as Black is running risks after 39...♙f6!? 40.♙xf6† ♙xf6 41.♙e3 g4 42.f4 gxf3† 43.♙f2 ♙d5 although the position remains about level. 36...♙d5? does not make any sense now. The bishop is no longer pinned, so White wins after 37.♖xd5! cxd5 38.♙xe5 dxe4 39.♙xf6† ♙xf6 40.♙d1 with his extra pawn. 37.gxf4 ♙xf4 Other bishop moves change nothing. 38.♙g1† ♙h8 39.♙h1† With a draw by perpetual check. Black can also hold after 39...♙h6?! 40.♙xh6† ♖xh6 41.♙h4, but there is no reason for him to accept the hassle.

57. Munguntuul – E. Danielian, Moscow 2011

This game was close to becoming one of my all-time favourites. Unfortunately it turned out to be too difficult for the Mongolian player to convert the attack into a full point. The big point comes on move 25. 18.♖h6!! It should be said that White also has the better chances in the following long and complicated variation, but we shall still consider it unsatisfactory: 18.♙xe7†! ♙h8 19.♖xd7 ♙ad8 20.e6! fxe6 21.♙c6 (21.♖xg7 ♙xd7 22.♙xd7 ♙f6 23.♙c6 transposes) 21...♙xd7 22.♙xd7 ♖b6 23.♖xg7 ♙f6 24.♙ce5 ♙xd7 25.♙xd7 With three pieces for the queen, White has good winning chances. But the game would still hold lots of surprises. 18.♙f6†? would on the other hand be entirely wrong. After 18...♙h8! Black is already better. 18...♙g6 18...♙xg3? 19.♙f6† gxf6 20.exf6 is elementary. After 20...♙h5 White can just play 21.♖xh5 without her attack losing any of its power. 19.♖xg6! fxe6 19...hxg6 20.♙e7# 20.♙e7† ♙f7 20...♙h8? 21.♙xg6† ♙g8 22.♙c4† and Black is mated. 21.♙c4†! This is the right way to continue the attack. In the game White went astray with: 21.♙xd7? ♙ad8! White must have underestimated her problems on the first rank. (21...gxf6? is too compliant. White is winning after 22.♙c6†.) 22.e6† (22.♙c4† ♙e8 23.♙xd8† ♖xd8 leads to a material advantage for Black.) 22...♙xe6! 23.♙c4†! (23.♖xg7 ♙xd7 24.♙c4† ♙d6 25.♖xf8 ♙xe7 26.♖b8† ♙c5 27.♖f8 ♖c7 Black is in control and has an extra exchange. Still it was the best chance to resist a bit.) 23...♙xd7 24.♖xg7 ♙e8! White's attack has not just been repelled, it has also been squashed. 25.♙c1 ♖c5 26.♙d5 ♙xd5 27.♙xd5 ♖xd5 28.♖xa7 ♙f6 29.♖b8† ♙e7 30.♖xb4† ♙d6 31.b3 h6 32.a4 g5 33.hxg5 hxg5 34.a5 g4 35.♙h4 ♙f6 36.g3 ♖e5 0-1 21...♙e6 21...♙e8 22.♖xg7 is completely winning. White is threatening e6, ♙d5, ♙g5 and so on. 22.♙xe6† ♙xe6 22...♙xe7 23.♖xg7† ♙xe6 24.♙d7# 23.♙d4† 23.♖xg7? ♙ad8! forces White to come up with 24.♙d6†! ♙xd6 25.exd6 ♙e8 26.♙c6 ♖a6 27.♖e5† ♙d7 28.♖xe8† ♙xe8 29.d7† ♙f7! 30.a4 ♖f1† 31.♙a2 ♖c4† 32.♙b1 with a draw. 23...♙xe7 24.♙c6†! 24.♖xg7†? ♙f7 25.♙c6† ♙e6 White hardly has an advantage after 26.♖xf7† ♙xf7 27.♙xa5 ♙e6. In fact I have a lot of respect for Black's prospects on the kingside. An active king is very useful! 24...♙e6 25.♖xh7!! This is the big point of the whole exercise. If White plays 25.♖xg7? Black can once again equalize with

25...♟f7!. **25...♞ad8** Black has other moves of course, but if this does not work, it is obvious that none of the others would either. **26.♟xg6† ♞f6** 26...♟f6 27.♞e1! is nice. White will take a lot of stuff with check next. **27.♟xf6† gxf6** **28.♟xd8†!** White wins the queen back and with it the game.

58. Kasparov – Anand, Las Palmas 1996

This shows just how difficult calculation is. The greatest player ever, close to the peak of his ability, still cannot get it right every time. **20.g4!** Instead Kasparov played: 20.♟d5? h5± The game was drawn in 63 moves. **20...♟c8** 20...d5 21.gxf5 dxc4 22.♟h6 wins for White on account of 22...♟d5† 23.♟g1 ♞f8 24.b3! with a decisive attack. 24...♟d6 25.bxc4 and the bishop comes to a3. **21.♟d5!** It is possible to understand why Kasparov missed the final move of the main line, but harder to see why he did not find 21.♞c3!? ♟b7† 22.♟d5± with real winning chances in the ending. **21...♟h4** **22.♞g1!** Just defending the pawn. **22...g5** 22...♟b8 23.♟h6 ♟h8 24.c4! and Black loses a piece. **23.♞xh4 gxf4** **24.g5 ♟g7** **25.g6** Making the most of the bishop on d5. **25...♟f5** 25...hxc6 26.♞xg6 ♟h3 27.♟g1 followed by ♟h6 and White wins. **26.gxf7† ♟h8** **27.♟xa8 ♞xa8** **28.♟d5 ♞f8** Apparently Kasparov saw all of this, but overlooked the final nail in the coffin: **29.♟h6!** White wins.

59. Nabaty – Thejkumar, Chennai 2011

Black missed a defence I believed to be impossible to find – until Sabino did just that... 34...♞c8? 35.f7 just wins easily; next comes 36.e7. 35...d4 36.e7 ♟xf7 37.♟a4! and Black cannot defend d4 and e8 at the same time. In the game Black lost after: **34...♟a1†? 35.♟b1! ♟xb1†?!** Better was 35...♟a4! 36.♟xf5 ♟a1† 37.♟b1 ♟a4 but it does not hold, even though it was the toughest defence. White plays: 38.b4!! d4 39.e7 ♟c4 40.♞h3 d3 (40...♟a3† 41.♟d2 dxc3† 42.♞xc3 ♟a6 43.♟e4 ♞e8 44.♟xc4 ♟xf6 45.♞e3 and White wins gradually as Black cannot play 45...♞xe7?! 46.♟c8† ♟g7 47.♞g3†+) 41.♞xd3 ♟xd3 42.f7 ♟g7 43.e8=♟ ♞xe8 44.fxe8=♟ ♟xe8 45.♟xd3 and I believe White should win, although it will not be easy. **36.♟xb1 ♟c8** 36...♟b5 37.f7 ♞f8 38.♞g5! also wins for White. For example: 38...♟e8 39.♟xf5 ♟xf7 40.exf7 ♟g7 41.♞xd5+– **37.e7 ♟e6** **38.♞g7 f4** **39.♟c1 ♞b8** **40.b4 ♟d7** **41.♟d2 ♟b5** **42.♞g5 ♟e8** **43.♞xd5 1–0**

34...d4!! 35.e7! The best defence for White. 35.f7? d3 is more or less winning for Black. There are two important points: 36.e7 (36.♞xd3 ♟xe6! 37.♟f2 ♟xf7 38.♞d6 ♟b5 39.♟d4† ♟g8± This is hard to win in practice, but equally hard to defend.) 36...♟xf7 37.♟a4 d2†! 38.♟xd2 ♟d5† 39.♟c1 ♟h1† 40.♟d2 ♟xh2† 41.♟c1 ♟xg3 42.e8=♟† ♞xe8 43.♟xe8† ♟g7 44.♟e7† ♟g6 45.♟e6† ♟g5 46.♟xa6 ♟g1† 47.♟c2 ♟f2† 48.♟b1 h5 and Black has serious winning chances in this ending. **35...d3!** Simplest. 35...♟e6 also holds because of 36.f7 ♟xe7! (36...♟xf7? is again met with: 37.♟a4!! ♟c4 38.♟c6 ♞e8 39.♟d6 ♟xe7 40.♟xd4† ♟e5 41.♞e3!+–) 37.♟f2! ♟e5 38.♟g1 ♟f4† 39.♟c2 ♟e4† 40.♟c1 ♟f4† With a draw. **36.♞xd3 ♟xd3** **37.♟xd3 ♞g8=** **38.♟e2 ♟f7** **39.♟e5** White can probably draw, but nothing more.

60. Annaberdiev – Bu Xiangzhi, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010

21...♟xe4!! 22.♟e3 Absolutely forced. 22.fxe4?! makes it easy for Black. 22...♟xe4† 23.♟a1 ♞xa2† 24.♟xa2 b3†! Simplest, but not the only winning move. 25.♟xb3 ♞a8† 26.♟a5 ♞xa5† 27.♟b3 ♟a4† 28.♟c3 ♞c5† 29.♟d2 ♞c2#; 22.♞ge1 is also hopeless. Black wins with wild tactics or simply 22...gxf5 23.fxe4 fxc4+–. **22...♟xf5!** This is the beginning of a truly brilliant combination. Instead the game concluded with: 22...gxf5? 23.gxf5† ♟g3 24.♞xg3† ♟h8 25.♟g5 ♞a5 (25...b3? would have lost the remains of the advantage after the following beautiful line: 26.♞dg1! ♞aa8 27.♞h3! bxa2† 28.♟a1 ♟f6 29.♟h5 ♟g7 30.♞hg3 ♟f6 31.♞h3 with a draw.) 26.♟d2? (26.♞g4±) 26...♟xf5†

27.♔a1 ♖xa2† 28.♔xa2 ♜d5† White resigned. 29.b3 ♖a8† 30.♔b2 ♖a3# **23.♖xf5** 23.gxf5 ♖c3† is trivial. **23...♖xa2!** **24.♔xa2 ♖e6†!!** This is the big move that Bu must have missed. **25.♔b1** 25.b3 ♖c3† wins easily, and 25...♖c2† is even stronger. **25...♖c3†!** **26.bxc3 ♖b3†** **27.♔c1 bxc3** Despite all of his pieces, White is done for. **28.♖xe7† ♔f8** **29.♖xd6** 29.♖g2 ♖a8! with mate to follow. **29...♖b2†** **30.♔d1 c2†** **31.♔e2 c1=♖†** **32.♖d2 ♖cxd2†!** **33.♖xd2 ♖c2** Black wins.

61. Polgar – Gelfand, Khanty-Mansiysk (3.2) 2009

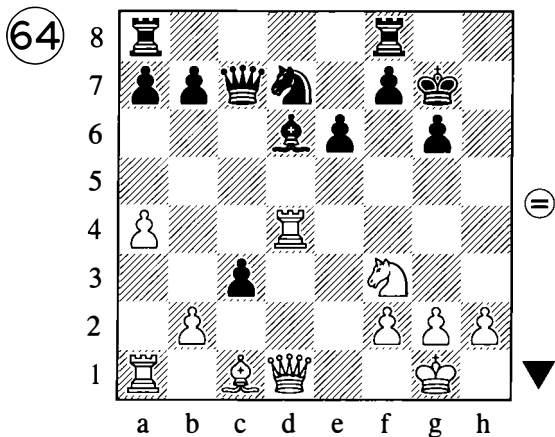
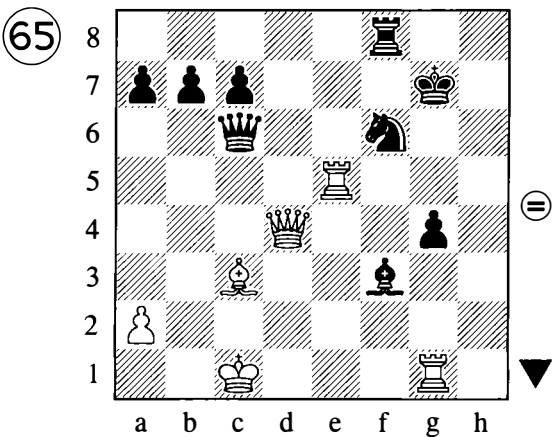
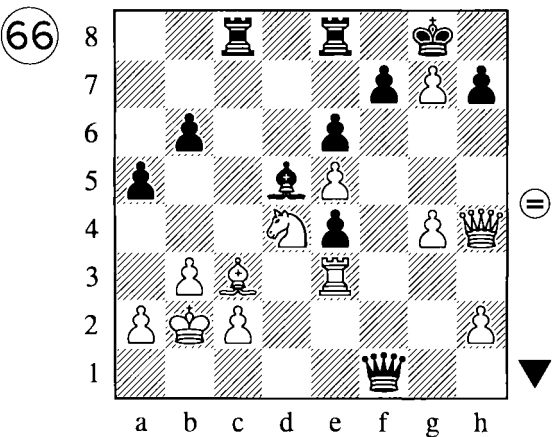
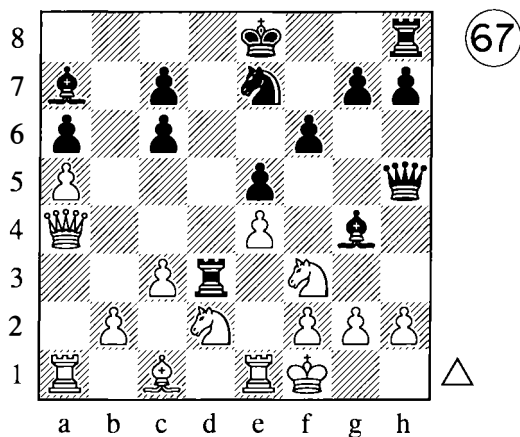
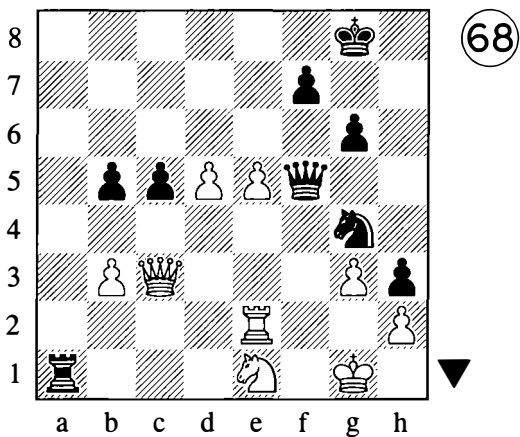
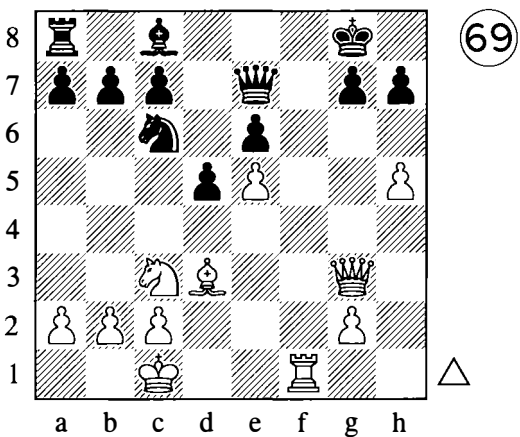
21.♖xf7! In the game, after 21.♖f5 ♖xg5 22.♖xg5 f6† Judit was lucky to win (1–0, 32). **21...gxh2†** **22.♔xh2!** Judit must have disregarded this move. Why, I do not know. 22.♖xh2? ♖xd2 23.♖f5? (Better is 23.♖xh7 with even chances: 23...b4 24.♖xa6 ♖a5 25.♖xh5 gxh5 26.♖f5 ♖xg5 27.♖xh5 ♖d8 and all White has is a perpetual check.) 23...♖xg5! or 23...♖f3† wins for Black. **22...♖f8** 22...♖xd2 23.♖xh7 is also winning. **23.♖xh7** This gives White a winning attack. After something like **23...♖xd2** everything wins. Simplest is possibly: **24.♖h8†! ♔xh8** **25.♖xg6† ♔g8** **26.♖xh5 ♖f6** **27.♖g1** and the attack is devastating.

62. D. Mastrovasilis – Ivanchuk, Eretria 2011

Dimitrios Mastrovasilis is quickly becoming a great player. Here he was only an inch away from defeating the greatest ever Ukrainian player (sorry Ruslan!). **32.♖xa7!!** A nice combination, but this is only the start. A lot of wood is thrown in the oven after all. 32.♖af3 ♖xe6 33.dxe6 ♖d3! would have left the position in a muddle. White does not have time to play 34.♖h5 on account of 34...g5!†. **32...♖xa7** **33.♖d7!** ♖xd7 **34.♖xd7 ♖xd7** **35.♖e7?** This logical move throws away the win. However, it was not easy to work out: 35.♖f7 ♖f8 36.♖f2! was the great winning triangulation. The line is just gorgeous. 36...♔g8 37.♖e7!! (37.♖c7?! ♖xe4 38.♖f7† ♔h8 39.♖xc4 ♖a8 40.♖c1 is of course better for White, but how much can be debated.) 37...♖xe4 38.♖f7† ♔h8 39.♖xe5 dxe5 40.♖f6† ♔g8 41.♖xe5 and wins. **35...♖a4?** Around here you can sense just how short of time the players were. Almost every move is a mistake. Correct defence was 35...c3! 36.b3 ♖d3 37.♖f7 ♔g8! 38.♖xd7 c2 39.♖e6! ♔h8 40.♖c7 ♖f8 41.g3 ♖xe4† and Black will give a perpetual check. **36.♖f7?** 36.g4 ♔g8 37.h4! would have been very dangerous for Black. The pawns are strong attackers. **36...♔g8** **37.g3 ♖f8?** 37...♖c5! 38.♖a7 ♖c2 39.♖xb8† ♔xf7 with approximately even chances was called for. **38.♖xh7??** 38.♖xf8† ♖xf8 39.♔g2 and White would have been better. Now he loses instead. **38...♖f6! 0–1**

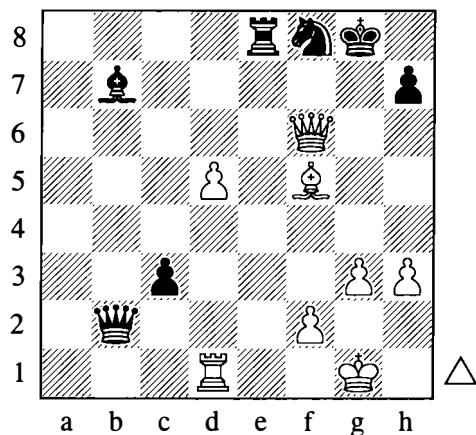
63. Shirov – Grachev, Lublin 2011

17...h6! The only move. But Black needs to calculate everything to the end in order to make it work. 17...♖xe5? fails completely. 18.♖xf5 ♖g6 And now although 19.h5 is a serious move, the convincing way to play is: 19.fxg7! ♔xg7 20.♖xg6 fxg6 21.♖e5† and White just wins. 17...♖d8?! also fails. The idea 18.♖xf5 ♖xf6 19.exf6 ♖xf6 20.♖xf6 gxf6 does look sort of attractive, but after 21.♖xd5!± it is clear Black is in for a tough time in the ending. **18.♖xf5 hxg5** **19.hxg5** The attack looks absolutely terrifying. Only one defence works. **19...bxc3!** The only move. 19...gxf6? is mated after either 20.♖dh1 or 20.gxf6 ♖xf6 21.exf6 exf5 22.♖g3† ♔h7 23.♖h1#. 19...g6 20.♖dh1 is just mate. And 19...♖xe5 20.♖dh1 ♖g6 is eliminated beautifully with 21.♖h8†!! ♖xh8 22.♖h7#. **20.♖dh1!** The most testing, but instead Shirov wanted to end the game on his terms and not force his opponent to show his hand. The game went: 20.♖h7† ♔h8 21.♖g6† ♔g8 22.♖h7† ♔h8 23.♖d3† ♔g8 24.♖h7† with a draw. **20...cxb2†** **21.♔b1 ♖xa2†!!** **22.♔xa2 b1=♖†** **23.♖xb1 ♖xb1** And finally White needs to take the perpetual check...

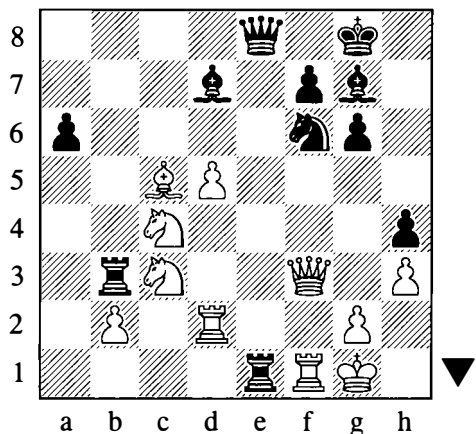
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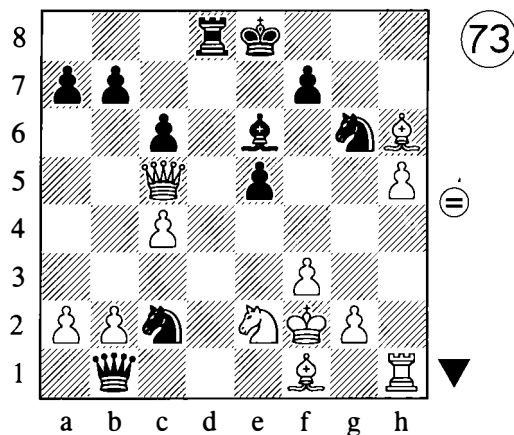
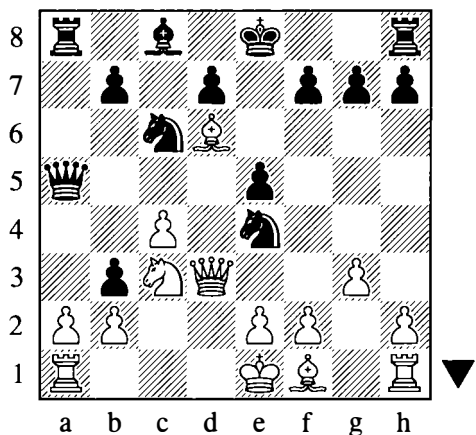
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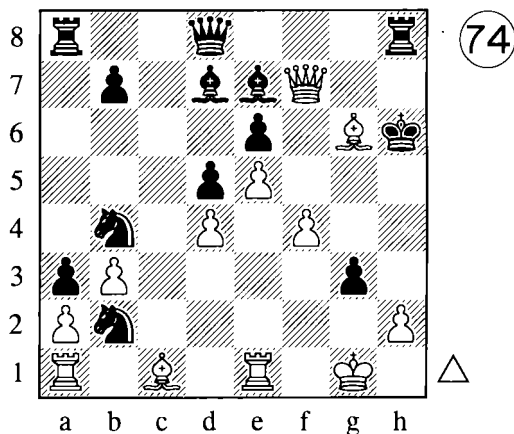
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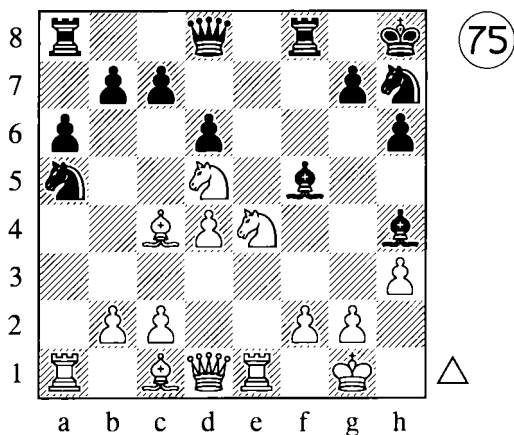
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Fier – Ryan, *Imagination*

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Magomedov – Belyakov, *Imagination*

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64. Cmilyte – E. Danielian, Shenzhen 2011

18...♟fd8? 19.♞xd6 c2 20.♞d2 ♘g8 This is now too late. 20...♞e5!? was the only try, but White has a route to a serious advantage: 21.♞h6† ♘g8 22.♙g5! ♞dc8 (22...♞xd6 23.♙f6 ♞d1† 24.♞e1 and Black is mated) 23.♞xe5 ♞xd6 24.♞e1 ♞b4 25.♙f1 and White wins. **21.♞d3 ♞f6** 21...♞c5 22.♞xd8† ♞xd8 23.♞xc2 and wins. **22.♞aa3! ♞e4 23.♞e2 ♞c5 24.♞xc2 ♞b6 25.♞xd8† 25.♙e3! 25...♞xd8 26.h4 ♞d6 27.♙e3 ♞d3 28.♙g5 ♞b4 29.♞d2 ♞xd2 30.♙xd2 1–0**

Also after 18...♞ad8 19.♞xd6 ♞e5!? I do not think the compensation is sufficient. White can play 20.♞xd8 ♞xd8 21.♞e2 c2 22.♞d2 and Black does not have an obvious way to show compensation, as 22...♞d3 is met strongly with 23.♞e4! planning ♞c3.

18...♙c5 19.♞xd7 c2 does not work for a number of reasons. For example 20.♙h6†!

For this reason the only try was **18...c2 19.♞d2 ♘g8!!** stepping away from the check on h6, which is so crucial for White in many lines. White now has to search for equality somehow (20. b3 or 20.h3), as after **20.♞xd6?** she will find only suffering: **20...♞c5 21.♞a3 ♞ad8 22.♞d4 e5 23.♞xd8 ♞xd8 24.♞e3 ♞d1† 25.♞e1 ♞e4** Black clearly has a big advantage here, even though she is a piece down. The computer assists in the following analysis, offering Black serious winning chances in the endgame: **26.g3 ♞c6 27.h3 f5 28.♙h2 f4 29.gxf4 exf4 30.♞b3† ♘g7 31.♞xc2 ♞xc2 32.♞xc2 ♞xc1 33.♞d4 ♙f6†**

65. Henrichs – Hector, Dortmund 2011

32...♙g6? was the game. White found the direct win: **33.♞d3† ♙f7 34.♞ge1 ♞d6** The main point behind White's play is to be found after 34...♞e8 35.♞xe8 ♞xe8 36.♞h7† ♙f8 and now simply 37.♞e7† and all sane men would resign. **35.♞f5 a5 36.♞e6 ♞a3† 37.♙b2 1–0**

32...♞f7? is dubious. White has too much freedom and 33.♞e3 looks strong. But simplest is: 33.♞g5†! ♙h6 (33...♙f8 34.♞e1! and White wins) 34.♞c5 With the idea 34...♞d6 35.♞f5 ♞xd4 36.♙xd4 and White wins because of 36...♙g6 37.♞xf3!. 34...♞e4 is therefore forced, but even so White wins after 35.♞d2† ♙h7 36.♞e1 with a decisive attack.

32...♙f7? loses to both 33.♞f5 and 33.♞c5! ♞d6 34.♞xc7†! and the checks will be deadly.

32...b6? prevents this annoying ♞c5 move, but White has many ways to win. Most direct is including the worst-played piece in the game. 33.♞ge1 ♞f7 34.♞e6 ♞d5 35.♞f4 ♞c5 36.♞1e3 and White is about to win material, as long as he answers 36...♙h7!? with 37.♙b2 or similar.

For this reason Black has to play: **32...♞d8! 33.♞e3 33.♞xd8 ♞xc3†** obviously does not work. 33.♞e7† ♙g6 34.♞xc7 is a drawing combination. Black can take the rook, even if this looks scary, or take on d4 and hold the ending. **33...♙f7!** Stepping away from the check; White lacks a direct win here. After 33...♞d6? 34.♞e1 ♙f7 35.♞c5! Black would face a serious attack. For example: 35...♞d7 (35...♞e4 36.♞h6! ♞xe1† 37.♙xe1 ♞d1† 38.♙b2 ♞xe1 39.♞f5 and the knight is lost as well: 39...♞e6 40.♞h7† ♙e8 41.♞g6† ♙e7 42.♞g7†) 36.♞g5! ♞c6 37.♙b2 ♞d8 38.♞f5 ♞h8 39.♙b4 and White wins. **34.♞f5 34.♞e7† ♙g6** does not threaten the king. Black has 35.♞e6 ♞d6! as an important defensive resource. 34.♞c5 ♞d5 (34...♞b6!?) 35.♞g5 ♞xc5 36.♞f5† with a perpetual. **34...♞d6!** This is the defensive set-up Black should be aiming for. **35.♞e1 ♙e4! 36.♞f4 ♙g6** Black holds.

66. Aagaard – Kraai, Budapest 2003

White has a very strong attack on the kingside, but Black can save the game with a remarkable tactical resource, based on an intermediate move. **29...a4!!** 29...♞f4? This was the “only” move according to what Jesse and I believed. But actually it should have lost. 30.♞h3 h6 31.♟e2=? After this the chances are equal. I still managed to trick him and won on move 53, but here I have nothing. Instead I should have played 31.♞f6!, forcing him to play 31...♞g5 32.♞xh6 ♞xg7. Here the black king is too open and White easily creates a winning attack: 33.♞f4 e3 34.♞h5 ♟f8 35.♙e1 and Black cannot survive. 35...♟e7 36.♙h4† ♟d7 37.h3 and just ♞xe3, ♙f6, ♞h6 and so on. White does not need to win quickly; the attack will not disappear.

The point of the exercise is beautifully explained in the line 29...♞xc3?! 30.♞xc3 e3 31.♞g3!!, when White has a serious advantage. The e-pawn will fall and Black lacks the ...♞f4 counterplay he has in our main line. **30.♞h3!** This is the real test, but does not explain the full thinking behind the last move. The main point is an intermediate move (or improvement of the position if you like) as after 30.bxa4 Black can play 30...♞xc3! 31.♞xc3 e3. Now White does not have an advantage after 32.♞g3? e2 33.♞e3 for simple reasons. After 33...♙c4 he is actually struggling quite a lot. Instead he needs to play 32.♞xe3 ♞f4 33.♞d3 ♞xe5 and the chances are about even, though the position is not drawn. I would not like to be White here over the board. **30...a3†!** This is perhaps surprising as we usually try to weaken our opponent's pawn structure with ...axb3 and slower play. But here there is no time for such things. Instead a tempo is gained for Black to use his extra material in the best way possible. **31.♟xa3** Black now has no choice as 31...♞c1† 32.♙b2! ♞a8† 33.♟b4 leaves Black in trouble with his queen. **31...♞a8†** Forcing the king to come out, as 32.♟b2 ♞xa2† is an easy mating combination. **32.♟b4** If my opponent looked at this during the game (I certainly did not) he might have concluded that mate was imminent, based on 32...♟xg7 33.♟f5†!! But chances are he did not see it at all and only played what he thought was forced. Instead he has a fantastic drawing resource. I should in passing mention the odd 32.♙a5?, which if taken does not prevent the draw, but actually loses because of 32...♞c1†! winning the bishop and preparing the simple ...h6, stopping the white attack. **32...♞a4†!!** **33.bxa4** Obviously not 33.♟xa4? ♞a6† 34.♟b4 ♞a5#. **33...♞c4†** **34.♟a3** ♞xa2† **35.♟b4** ♞c4†=

67. Bulmaga – Drozdova, Moscow 2012

White is able to claim an advantage after a most remarkable idea: **21.♞c4!** ♞xf3 21...♞d8 22.♞xa6± is not so interesting; Black has to sacrifice. **22.♟xf3 ♙xf3** **23.h3!!** This is the fabulous idea. Rather than taking the bishop in an unfavourable way, White is trapping the bishop, at least for now. It is actually far more important to avoid ...♞xh2 and to prepare ♞xa6. This is the great mystery of life: the most important things are not always those that appear the most urgent. Such as, for example, the ability to take a bishop. Instead the game went: 23.♙e3? ♙xe3 24.fxe3 ♙g4† The white king is weak and Black won on move 46. **23...f5!** Black has to come out fighting. Instead 23...♞h4 24.♙e3± is rather dismal. For example: 24...♙e3 25.♞xe3 ♙h5 26.♞xa6 0–0 27.♞c4† ♙f7 28.♞c5 f5 29.a6 and Black will struggle a lot against the white a-pawn. **24.♞xa6 ♙xf2** Again the only try. **25.♟xf2 ♞h4†** **26.g3!** ♞xh3 **27.♟xf3** 0–0 **28.♙e3** White is preparing for the king to escape to the queenside. **28...fxe4†** Black has no happy ways to create counterplay. She is simply a rook down. 28...♞h2? 29.♞e2! fxe4† 30.♟xe4 and White wins. 28...f4!? 29.♙c5! ♞d8 does trap the white king, but it is protected by many bodyguards. (29...fxg3† 30.♟e3! ♞d8 31.♞c4† ♟h8 32.♞f7 g2† 33.♟e2 ♞g4† 34.♞f3 ♞d2† 35.♟xd2 ♞xf3 36.a6 ♟c8 37.♞e2 and

White will have every chance of winning the game with her, soon to be gained, extra piece; although there are technical difficulties awaiting ahead.) 30.♔g1! ♖g6 31.♕e2 ♖h2† 32.♕f1 ♖xb2 33.♖c4† ♕h8 34.♖e1 White is on the way to taking the full point although it might take her a long time to get there. 29.♕e2 ♖g2† 30.♕d1 ♖xb2 30...♕d5 31.♖c4 ♕h8 32.♕d2 e3 looks clever, but is refuted by 33.♖e2! and White is sufficiently coordinated. 31.♖c4† ♕d5 32.♖a2 ♖xc3 White can choose between 33.♖c2± and 33.♖xc3!? ♕xc3† 34.♕c2 ♕xa2 35.♕b3 ♖a8 36.♕d2 ♖d8 37.♖e2± both with excellent winning chances.

68. Kryakvin – Efimenko, Olginka 2011

I believed this exercise to be unsolvable until Sabino Brunello solved it. I think I have written these exact words elsewhere in the book? 42...♖d1!! Black eventually won the game after 42...♖a8? 43.d6 ♖c8, but here White could have equalized fully with 44.♖f3!. 42...♖b1!? 43.d6 ♖a2 44.♖f3 ♖xe2 45.♖xe2 ♖a1 46.e6 ♖d4† 47.♕f1 ♕e3† 48.♕g1 ♕f5†± was also possible, but not best. 43.e6 43.d6 b4+ wins like the main line after 45.♖xc5. 43...b4 44.exf7† ♕h7!! 44...♕xf7 45.♖xc5!± and the game would not be so clear because of all the checks White can give. 45.♖xc5 45.♖b2 ♖xf7 46.♖e4 ♖a7 47.♕f1 ♖d4 and Black wins in boring technical fashion. 45...♖f3!! Preparing a nice combination. 46.f8=♕† ♕g8 47.♖c2 ♖g2†!! 48.♖xg2 ♖xe1#

69. Hector – So, Malmö 2011

19.♔g6!! hxg6 20.hxg6 ♕d4 The only defensive try. 21.♖f7 ♖d8 22.♖g4!! This incredibly subtle move was pointed out by Arkadij Naiditsch in *Chess Evolution*. The game ended with a loss for our hero after: 22.♖f4? ♕f5+ 23.g4 ♕h4! 24.♖xg7† ♕xg7 25.♖f7† ♕h6 26.♖h7† ♕g5 27.♖h5† ♕f4 28.♕e2† ♕e3 29.g5 ♕f3 30.♕d1 ♖xg5 31.♖h7 ♕f2 And it is White who is mated. 0–1 22...♕f5 23.♖h5 ♕h6 24.g4 Curiously Black is helpless against White's slow attack. 24...♖e8 25.♖f2 c6 This move seems senseless, but if you look at the alternative you can see that the d5-pawn will need some support in the lines where White sacrifices with ♖xf5. Naiditsch only gave 25...♖c6, after which the white attack is rather straightforward: 26.g5 ♕f5 27.♕e2 ♖c4 28.♖f4! and White wins: 28...♖a6 29.♖xf5 exf5 30.♖h7† ♕f8 31.♖h8† ♕e7 32.♖xg7† ♕d8 33.♖g8† ♕d7 34.♖xd5† ♕e7 35.♖f7† ♕d8 36.g7 26.♕e2! ♕d7 26...a5 27.♕d4 ♕d7 28.g5 ♕f5 29.♕xf5 exf5 30.♖h2 ♕f8 31.♖h8† ♕e7 32.♖xg7† ♕d8 33.♖h8+; 26...♖e7 27.g5 (27.♕d4 ♕d7 28.g5 ♖f8±; 27.♖f4 ♖c5 28.♖h4 ♕d7 29.g5) 27...♖c5 28.♖f3 ♕f5 29.♕d1 ♖b8□ 30.c3 d4 31.♕xd4 ♖xe5 32.♖d3 ♕e3† 33.♕c1 ♕d5 34.♖f3 ♕f4 35.♖h7† ♕f8 36.♖h4+– 27.g5 27.♕d4? ♖b8!! and Black wins because White cannot play g4-g5. Next comes ...♖c7 and ...♖f8. 27...♕f5 28.♕d4 ♕f8 29.♕xf5 exf5 30.♖h8† ♕e7 31.♖xg7† ♕d8 32.♖e2 White wins. His next moves will be ♖f6† and e6 unless Black plays 32...♕e6?! when White can change his focus with 33.♖h2!+–.

70. Eljanov – Andreikin, Saratov 2011

The game went: 29.♖d4? This looks absolutely devastating, but Black had the chance to escape with a miracle draw. The draw was close after 29...♖e1† 30.♕g2 ♖e2!!, when it turns out that White cannot win the game as fast as he was hoping! 31.♕d3! was no doubt the move that Andreikin could not find a reply to. Through sheer chess blindness no doubt. (31.♖g4† ♕g6 32.♕xg6 allows Black to give a perpetual and 31.♕xh7† ♕xh7 32.♖g4† transposes.) The solution was: 31...♖e6!! The only place from which to keep an eye on g4. 32.♕xh7† (32.♖g4†? ♕g6!+–)

32...♟h7 33.♞g4† ♞xg4 34.♞d8† ♟f7 35.hxg4 ♟f6 36.♞c7† ♞e7 37.♞xc3 and the ending will be a draw after Black eliminates a few white pawns. **29...♞c1†?** Black returns the favour, maybe under duress from the clock. **30.♟h2 ♞e1 31.♟xh7† 1-0**

Sabino Brunello solved this exercise by elimination. This is what he found: **29.♟e6†! ♟xe6 30.dxe6 ♞f8!** 30...♟c6 31.♞f7† ♟h8 32.e7 With the threat of ♞f8†. 32...♞b4 33.♞f6† ♟g8 34.♞xc6 And the combination of an attack on the king and the favourable ending looming in the distance means that White wins rather easily. **31.♞g5† ♟h8 32.♞c5!! ♟g8 33.e7 ♞e8 34.♞c4† ♟g7 34...♟h8 35.♞f7 35.♞g4† ♟f6 36.♞d6† ♟f7 36...♟xe7 37.♞d7† ♟f8 38.♞f6† 37.♞e6†** 37.♞h5† transposes. **37...♟g7 38.♞h6† ♟g8 39.♞g6†! hxg6 40.♞xg6† ♟h8 41.♞xe8† ♟g7 42.♞f8† ♟h7 43.♞f7† ♟h6 44.♞e6† ♟h7 45.e8=♞** White wins.

71. Kasimdzhanov – Bologan, Dresden 2008

Bologan overlooked a fantastic combination: **27...♟b5!!** The game ended in a draw after 27...♞xf1†? and further complications. **28.♟d6 ♞e7!** Probably it was this clever move he missed. **29.♟dxb5** Both 29.♟de4 ♟xf1!! 30.♟xe7 ♟b5† 31.♟h2 ♟xe4 and 29.♞d1 ♞xf1† 30.♞xf1 ♟xf1 31.♟xf1 ♟d7 also win. **29...♞xc5† 30.♟d4 ♞xb2!** 30...♟e4? does not work. After 31.♞xf7† ♟h7 32.♟xe4 ♞xe4 33.♟h2 ♞xd4 34.♞f6! White draws. But 30...♞xf1†! 31.♟xf1 ♞b4 32.♟de2 ♟h6 33.♞d1 ♟e8† would also have favoured Black. **31.♟a4 31.♞xb2 ♞xd4† 32.♞bf2 ♞e3** and wins. **31...♞xf1† 32.♞xf1 ♞xd5! 33.♟xb2 ♟e4** White is a rook up, but it is all about to disappear in a cloud of gunsmoke. Black wins.

72. S. Ernst – Bruzon Batista, Wijk aan Zee 2012

The continuation chosen in the game looked promising, but it should not have worked out as well as it did: **13...♟xc3? 14.bxc3 ♟d4 14...♞xa2 15.♞b1∞ 15.♟g2 ♟c2† 16.♟d2 ♟xa1 17.♞xa1** And surprisingly Black does not have a real edge here! **17...♞a6!?** 17...♞xa2† 18.♞xa2 bxa2 19.♞e3 f6 20.♟xe5 leads to a draw if Black is wise enough to recapture. Otherwise White wins: 20...0-0? 21.♟d5† ♟h8 22.♟xf6!! With a winning attack. For example: 22...♞a6 (22...gxf6 23.♞h6) 23.♟xg7† ♟xg7 24.♞e7† ♟g6 25.♞xf8 a1=♞ 26.♟e4† ♟h5 27.♞f5† ♟h6 28.♞xh7† ♟g5 29.♞h4# **18.c5??** 18.a3 with unclear play was the right path. **18...♞xa2†!** Now this works wonders. **19.♞xa2 bxa2 20.♞e4 f6 21.♟xe5 fxe5 22.♞xe5† ♞e6 0-1** The subtle difference.

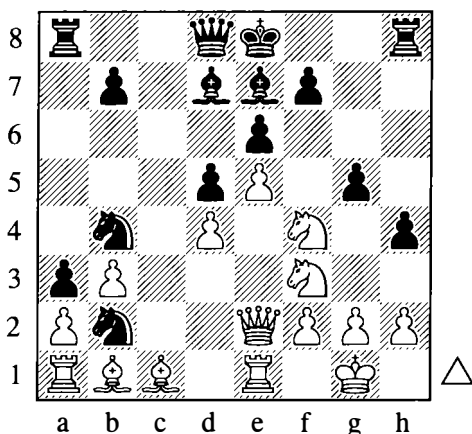
Correct was: **13...♟xd6! 14.♞xd6 ♟b4 15.c5!** A cunning try. 15.♟g2 ♞a6 16.♞b8 ♟c2† 17.♟d2 ♞a8 and Black wins. **15...♟d8!!** A fantastic move. Basically White wants to go to b8, or to take on e5, with gain of tempo. Black takes this away from him and wins. **16.♟g2 16.♞xe5 f6!** and all counterplay is dead. **16...♞a6** Black is winning. For example: **17.c6 ♟c2† 18.♟d1 ♞c7!** with full control.

73. Nepomniachtchi – Pavasovic, Rogaska Slatina 2011

Black could have saved the game with a fantastic idea: **22...♟f4!!** Instead the game ended: 22...♟e1?? A horrible move, but probably Black could not find any ideas. The solution is very deep and complicated. 23.♟g1 ♟d3 24.♞e3 ♟e7 25.♟g3 f5 26.♞g5 ♟f4 27.♟h2 ♞xb2 28.♟g7 ♞d2 29.♞g1 ♟xc4 30.h6 ♟d5 31.h7 ♟eg6 32.♟xf5 1-0. **23.♟xf4 23.♟xf4 exf4 24.♞a5** looks inferior, but all Black has is a draw with: 24...♟e3 followed by ...♟d1† and a return to e3 with a direct threat against the f1-bishop. **23...♞e1† 24.♟g1 ♟d4!!** For sure Pavasovic was nowhere close to seeing this move. White has two tries, both of which are very complicated. **25.♞f8†!** The best try.

The other one is: 25.♙g5 ♖e3† 26.♗h2 ♜xf3† 27.gxf3 ♗xc5 28.♜xe6 fxe6 29.♙xd8 ♜xd8 30.h6 ♗f2† 31.♙g2 Here Black should sensibly go for a draw before the h-pawn becomes too hot to handle, at least this is what I think. Rybka says -0.27. But then it is unfamiliar with the pain of losing positions with an extra queen! Let me get a cup of tea... I'm back, and finally the computer catches up on the obvious: 0.00. 25...♜d7 26.♗a3 ♙xc4 27.♗c3 ♗xf1† 28.♗h2 ♗f2 29.♜h3 ♗e2 30.♜g1! 30.♜f4 ♗f2= 30...♗d3 31.♗xd3 ♙xd3 32.♙g7 ♜e6 Black is okay in this ending, even if the h-pawn looks nice.

74. Fier – Ryan, Sabadell 2009



Fier considers this the most fantastic game he has ever played, even though he did not play the best move at every turn. If he has played a better game since, then he would rise even further in my high estimation. 20.♜g6! This sacrifice is not so difficult, but the follow-up pulls teeth. 20...fxg6 21.♙xg6† ♜f8 22.♜xg5! What else? 22...♙xg5 22...♜g7 23.♗g4! (23.♜f7!? also wins) 23...♗g8 24.♙f7 ♗xf7 25.♜xf7† ♜xf7 26.♙g5 and White has a winning attack on the dark squares. 23.♗f3† ♜g7 24.♗f7† ♜h6 25.f4 ♙e7 So far so good. But what next? 26.g4!! 26.♙b1? ♙e8! 27.♗xe6† ♜g7 and the white attack is disappearing into the quicksand. 26.♙e4!? ♙e8 27.f5† ♙g5 28.♗xe6† ♜g7 29.f6† ♜f8 30.♙xg5 dxe4 31.♗g4 would have given White a strong attack, but the text move is even better. But we might as well see the line to the end. 31...♗c7! 32.e6 ♙h5 33.♙h6† ♙xh6 34.e7† ♜e8 35.♗g5 ♙xf6 36.♗xf6 ♗xe7 37.♗h8† ♜f7 38.♙f1† ♙f3 39.♗xa8 ♗g5 40.♙xf3† exf3 41.♗xb7† and White should win. 26...hxg3

We have arrived at our exercise.

27.h4!! Fighting for the g5-square. By giving up the pawn White forces Black to open the h-file, which comes in handy later on. **27...♙xh4** This is a very difficult position, where the trick deep down the line is hard to anticipate.

In the game Fier went wrong but was later justly rewarded for his creativity by a slip from his opponent. 28.♘g2? ♜c8 29.♙d2 ♙e8 30.f5+ ♞g5 31.♙xg5+ ♜xg5 32.♞g7 (When he played 26.g4 Fier was counting on 32.♞f6+ to do the job. But after 32...♜g4 33.♞xh8 ♜c2+ 34.♜g1 ♜h3!! White cannot avoid the perpetual check.) 32...♜c2+ 33.♜g1 ♜g4 34.fxe6 ♜f2? What is this? (34...♙xg6 35.♞xg6+ ♙g5 would have secured the draw. For example: 36.♜e3 ♜hh2 37.♜xg3+ ♜xg3 38.♞xg5+ ♜h3 and White has to give a perpetual check.) 35.♙d3+ ♜h3 36.♙f1+ ♜xf1+ 37.♜xf1 ♙b5 38.♞xh8 ♜4d3 39.e7 g2 40.♜f3+ ♜g4 41.♞f8 1–0

White had a seductive way to win, but Fier could not make it work during the game. With the aid of computers this is of course no problem. **28.f5+! ♙g5 29.♜g2! ♙xc1 30.♙h7!!** This would have made this game the greatest played so far in the 21st century (a cheap remark I have probably used before...). **30...♙e8 31.♜h1+ ♜g5 32.♞g7+ ♜f4 33.♞xg3+ ♜e4 34.♜axc1** Black is quickly mated.

75. Magomedov – Belyakov, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010

White is winning because of a very long variation. If you calculated this to the end then I wish you the best of luck reaching a rating of 2900. **16.♜xa5!!** In the game 16.♙d3?± gave White some advantage, but the position is not fully clear and the engines disagree on the evaluation. The result was a draw on move 42. **16...c6 17.♜f4!** The only move that makes sense. The g6-square is the weakness that counts in this combination. **17...♞xa5** 17...d5 18.♜c5 gives White a winning position. For example: 18...dxc4 19.♜xf5! ♜xf5 20.♜g6+ ♜g8 21.♞g4 winning material. **18.♜xd6 ♙xc2!** The tricky desperado many overlook from the initial position. White wins easily after 18...♙g5 19.♜xf5 and now 19...♞xf5 20.♙d3 or 19...♙xf4 20.♜e7!. **19.♜e5!!** The counter-desperado (of the century? No, I forgot, this sadly never happened...). 19.♞xc2? ♞xe1+ 20.♜h2 ♜xf4 21.♙xf4 ♜f8 and Black would have taken over the initiative. **19...♙xf2+ 19...♜xf4 20.♙xf4 ♙xd1 21.♜xa5** and White has a winning position. 19...♞a1 is prettily refuted by: 20.♜f5! (even 20.♞xc2 ♜xf4 21.g3± works well enough) 20...♙xf2+ 21.♜f1!! (21.♜h2? ♙xf5 22.♜xf5 ♜f6!! 23.♜xf6 ♜xf6 and Black holds. White needs this ♜xf2! move.) 21...♙xf5 22.♜xf5 ♜f6 23.♜xf6 ♜xf6 24.♜g6+ ♜h7 25.♞c2 ♜d5 26.♜xf2! **20.♜h2 ♜xf4 20...♞a4 21.♜g6+!** wins the queen. **21.♞xc2 ♞a1** We have now arrived at the third act. White wins by forcing the queen back to a5! **22.♜a5!! ♞xa5 23.♙xf4 ♜f8 24.♞xf2 g5** Here 25.♙d2 should win, but best is **25.b4!! ♜xf4 26.♞xf4** and White wins.

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Grandmaster Jacob Aagaard won the British Championship at his first and only attempt. He has received the Guardian, ECF and ChessCafe Book of the Year awards and the FIDE Senior Trainer title. His training material is used by amateurs and grandmasters alike.



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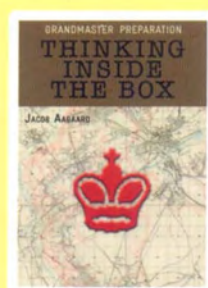
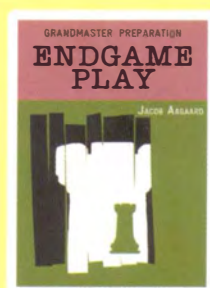
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